

**POEMS OF
ELLA WHEELER WILCOX**



POEMS
OF
ELLA WHEELER
WILCOX

PENCIL DRAWINGS BY ALICE ROSS



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INTRODUCTORY VERSES

*Oh, you who read some song that I have sung—
What know you of the soul from whence it sprung?*

*Dost dream the poet ever speaks aloud
His secret thought unto the listening crowd?*

*Go take the murmuring sea-shell from the shore—
You have its shape, its colour—and no more.*

*It tells not one of those vast mysteries
That lie beneath the Surface of the seas.*

*Our songs are shells, cast out by waves of thought;
Here, take them at your pleasure; but think not*

*You've seen beneath the surface of the waves,
Where lie our shipwrecks, and our coral caves.*

POEMS OF PASSION



Love's Language

How does Love speak ?

In the faint flush upon the tell-tale cheek,
And in the pallor that succeeds it ; by
The quivering lid of an averted eye—
The smile that proves the parent to a sigh—
Thus doth Love speak.

How does Love speak ?

By the uneven heart-throbs, and the freak
Of bounding pulses that stand still and ache,
While new emotions, like strange barges,
make
Along vein-channels their disturbing course ;
Still as the dawn, and with the dawn's swift
force—

Thus doth Love speak.

How does Love speak ?

In the proud spirit suddenly grown meek—

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The haughty heart grown humble ; in the
tender
And unnamed light that floods the world
with splendour,
In the resemblance which the fond eyes trace
In all fair things to one beloved face ;
In the shy touch of hands that thrill and
tremble ;
In looks and lips that can no more dissemble—
Thus doth Love speak.

How does Love speak ?
In the wild words that uttered seem so weak
They shrink ashamed to silence ; in the fire
Glance strikes with glance, swift flashing
high and higher,
Like lightnings that precede the mighty storm ;
In the deep, soulful stillness ; in the warm,
Impassioned tide that sweeps through throbbing
veins,
Between the shores of keen delights and
pains ;
In the embrace where madness melts in bliss,
And in the convulsive rapture of a kiss—
Thus doth Love speak.

POEMS OF PASSION

Impatience

How can I wait until you come to me ?

The once fleet mornings linger by the
way ;

Their sunny smiles touched with malicious
glee

At my unrest, they seem to pause, and play
Like truuant children, while I sigh and say,
How can I wait ?

How can I wait ? Of old, the rapid hours

Refused to pause or loiter, with me long ;

But now they idly fill their hands with
flowers,

And make no haste, but slowly stroll among
The summer blooms, not heeding my one
song,

How can I wait ?

How can I wait ? The nights alone are kind ;

They reach forth to a future day, and bring

Sweet dreams of you to people all my mind ;

And time speeds by on light and airy wing.

I feast upon your face, I no more sing,

How can I wait ?

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

How can I wait? The morning breaks the
spell

A pitying night has flung upon my soul.
You are not near me, and I know full well
My heart has need of patience and control ;
Before we meet, hours, days, and weeks
must roll.

How can I wait ?

How can I wait? Oh, love, how can I wait
Until the sunlight of your eyes shall shine
Upon my world that seems so desolate?

Until your hand-clasp warms my blood
like wine ;

Until you come again, 'oh, Love of mine,
How can I wait ?

Communism

WHEN my blood flows calm as a purling
river,

When my heart is asleep and my brain
has sway,

It is then that I vow we must part forever,
That I will forget you, and put you away

POEMS OF PASSION

Out of my life, as a dream is banished
Out of my mind when the dreamer
awakes ;
That I know it will be when the spell has
vanished,
Better for both of our sakes.

When the court of the mind is ruled by
Reason,
I know it is wiser for us to part ;
But Love is a spy who is plotting treason,
In league with that warm, red rebel, the
Heart.
They whisper to me that the King is cruel,
That his reign is wicked, his law a sin,
And every word they utter is fuel
To the flame that smoulders within.

And on nights like this, when my blood runs
riot
With the fever of youth and its mad
desires,
When my brain in vain bids my heart be quiet,
When my breast seems the centre of lava-
fires,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Oh, then is the time when most I miss you,
And I swear by the stars and my soul and say,
That I will have you, and hold you, and kiss
you,
Though the whole world stands in the way.

And like Communists, as mad, as disloyal,
My fierce emotions roam out of their lair;
They hate King Reason for being royal—
They would fire his castle, and burn him
there.

O love! they would clasp you, and crush
you, and kill you,
In the insurrection of uncontrol.
Across the miles, does this wild war thrill you
That is raging in my soul?

The Common Lot

It is a common fate—a woman's lot —
To waste on one the riches of her soul,
Who takes the wealth she gives him, but
cannot
Repay the interest, and much less the
whole.

POEMS OF PASSION

As I look up into your eyes, and wait
For some response to my fond gaze and
touch,
It seems to me there is no sadder fate
Than to be doomed to loving overmuch.

Are you not kind? Ah yes, so very kind—
So thoughtful of my comfort, and so true.
Yes, yes, dear heart; but I, not being blind,
Know that I am not loved, as I love you.

One tenderer word, a little longer kiss,
Will fill my soul with music and with
song;
And if you seem abstracted, or I miss
The heart-tone from your voice, my world
goes wrong.

And oftentimes you think me childish—
weak—
When at some thoughtless word the tears
will start;
You cannot understand how aught you speak
Has power to stir the depths of my poor
heart.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I cannot help it, dear—I wish I could,
Or feign indifference where I now adore ;
For if I seemed to love you less you would,
Manlike, I have no doubt, love me the
more.

'Tis a sad gift, that much applauded thing,
A constant heart ; for fact doth daily prove
That constancy finds oft a cruel sting,
While fickle natures win the deeper love.

Individuality

O YES, I love you, and with all my heart ;
Just as a weaker woman loves her own,
Better than I love my beloved art,
Which, till you came, reigned royally,
alone,
My king, my master. Since I saw your face
I have dethroned it, and you hold that place.

I am as weak as other women are—
Your frown can make the whole world
like a tomb.

POEMS OF PASSION

Your smile shines brighter than the sun,
by far ;

Sometimes I think there is not space or
room

In all the earth for such a love as mine,
And it soars up to breathe in realms divine.

I know that your desertion or neglect
Could break my heart, as women's hearts
do break,

If my woe had nothing to expect
From your love's splendour, all joy would
forsake

The chambers of my soul. Yes, this is true.
And yet, and yet—one thing I keep from you.

There is a subtle part of me, which went
Into my long pursued and worshipped art ;
Though your great love fills me with such
content

No other love finds room now, in my
heart.

Yet that rare essence was my art's alone.
Thank God you cannot grasp it ; 'tis mine
own.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Thank God, I say, for while I love you so,
With that vast love, as passionate as tender,
I feel an exultation as I know

I have not made you a complete surrender.
Here is my body ; bruise it, if you will,
And break my heart ; I have that *something*
still.

You cannot grasp it. Seize the breath of
morn,

Or bind the perfume of the rose as well.
God put it in my soul when I was born ;
It is not mine to give away, or sell,
Or offer up on any altar shrine.
It was my art's ; and when not art's, 'tis
mine.

For love's sake, I can put the art away,
Or anything which stands 'twixt me and
you.

But that strange essence God bestowed, I say,
To permeate the work He gave to do :
And it cannot be drained, dissolved, or sent
Through any channel, save the one He
meant.

POEMS OF PASSION

Upon the Sand

ALL love that has not friendship for its base,
Is like a mansion built upon the sand.

Though brave its walls as any in the land,
And its tall turrets lift their heads in grace ;
Though skilful and accomplished artists trace
Most beautiful designs on every hand,
And gleaming statues in dim niches stand,
And fountains play in some flow'r-hidden
place,

Yet, when from the frowning east a sudden
gust

Of adverse fate is blown, or sad rains fall
Day in, day out, against its yielding wall,
Lo ! the fair structure crumbles to the dust.
Love, to endure life's sorrow and earth's woe,
Needs friendship's solid masonwork below.

"The Beautiful Blue Danube

THEY drift down the hall together ;
He smiles in her lifted eyes.
Like waves of that mighty river,
The strains of the "Danube" rise

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

They float on its rhythmic measure,
Like leaves on a summer-stream ;
And here, in this scene of pleasure,
I bury my sweet, dead dream.

Through the cloud of her dusky tresses,
Like a star, shines out her face ;
And the form his strong arm presses
Is sylph-like in its grace.
As a leaf on the bounding river
Is lost in the seething sea,
I know that forever and ever
My dream is lost to me,

And still the viols are playing
That grand old wordless rhyme ;
And still those two are swaying
In perfect tune and time.
If the great bassoons that mutter,
If the clarionets that blow,
Were given a voice to utter
The secret things they know,

Would the lists of the slain who slumber
On the Danube's battle-plains
The unknown hosts outnumber
Who die 'neath the "Danube's" strains ?

POEMS OF PASSION

Those fall where cannons rattle,
 'Mid the rain of shot and shell ;
But these, in a fiercer battle,
 Find death in the music's swell.

With the river's roar of passion,
 Is blended the dying groan ;
But here, in the halls of fashion,
 Hearts break, and make no moan.
And the music, swelling and sweeping,
 Like the river, knows it all ;
But none are counting or keeping
 The lists of these who fall.

Answered

GOOD-BYE—yes, I am going.
 Sudden ? Well, you are right.
But a startling truth came home to me
 With sudden force last night.
What is it ? shall I tell you—
 Nay, that is why I go.
I am running away from the battlefield,
 Turning my back on the foe.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Riddles? You think me cruel!

Have you not been most kind?

Why, when you question me like that

What answer can I find?

You fear you failed to amuse me,

Your husband's friend and guest,

Whom he bade you entertain and please—

Well, you have done your best.

Then why am I going!

A friend of mine abroad,

Whose theories I have been acting upon,

Has proven himself a fraud.

You have heard me quote from Plato

A thousand times no doubt;

Well, I have discovered he did not know

What he was talking about.

You think I am speaking strangely?

You cannot understand?

Well, let me look down into your eyes,

And let me take your hand.

I am running away from danger—

I am flying before I fall;

I am going because with heart and soul

I love you—that is all.

POEMS OF PASSION

There, now, you are white with anger,
I knew it would be so.
You should not question a man too close
When he tells you he must go.

Through the Valley

[AFTER JAMES THOMSON]

As I came through the Valley of Despair,
As I came through the valley, on my sight,
More awful than the darkness of the night,
Shone glimpses of a Past that had been fair,
And memories of eyes that used to smile,
And wafts of perfume from a vanished isle,
As I came through the valley.

As I came through the valley I could see,
As I came through the valley, fair and far,
As drowning men look up and see a star,
The fading shore of my lost Used-to-be ;
And like an arrow in my heart I heard
The last sad notes of Hope's expiring bird,
As I came through the valley.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

As I came through the valley desolate,
As I came through the valley, like a beam
Of lurid lightning I beheld a gleam
Of Love's great eyes that now were full of
hate.

Dear God ! dear God ! I could bear all but
that ;
But I fell down soul-stricken, dead, thereat,
As I came through the valley.

, The Duet

I was smoking a cigarette ;
Maud, my wife, and the tenor McKey,
Were singing together a blithe duet,
And days it were better I should forget
Came suddenly back to me.
Days when life seemed a gay masque ball,
And to love and be loved was the sum of it all.

As they sang together, the whole scene fled,
The room's rich hangings, the sweet home
air,
Stately Maud, with her proud blonde head,



POEMS OF PASSION

And I seemed to see in her place instead
A wealth of blue-black hair,
And a face, ah ! your face—yours, Lisette,
A face it were wiser I should forget.

We were back—well, no matter when or
where,
But you remember, I know, Lisette,
I saw you, dainty, and débonnaire,
With the very same look that you used to
wear
In the days I should forget. •
And your lips, as red as the vintage we
quaffed, •
Were pearl-edged bumpers of wine when
you laughed.

Two small slippers with big rosettes,
Peeped out under your kilt-skirt there,
While we sat smoking our cigarettes
• (Oh, I shall be dust when my heart forgets !)
And singing that self-same air ;
And between the verses for interlude,
I kissed your throat, and your shoulders nude.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

You were so full of a subtle fire,
You were so warm and so sweet, Lisette ;
You were everything men admire,
And there were no fetters to make us tire,
For you were—a pretty grisette.
But you loved, as only such natures can,
With a love that makes heaven or hell for
a man.

.
They have ceased singing that old duet,
Stately Maud and the tenor McKey.
“You are burning your coat with your
cigarette,
And *qu’avez vous*, dearest, your lids are wet,”
Maud says, as she leans o’er me,
And I smile, and lie to her, husband-wise,
“Oh, it is nothing but smoke in my eyes.”

Little Queen

Do you remember the name I wore—
The old pet-name of Little Queen—
In the dear, dead days, that are no more,
The happiest days of our lives, I ween ?

POEMS OF PASSION

For we loved with that passionate love of
youth

That blesses but once with its perfect
bliss—

A love that, in spite of its trust and truth,
Seems never to thrive, in a world like this.

I lived for you, and you lived for me ;
All was centred in "Little Queen" ;
And never a thought in our hearts had we
That strife or trouble could come between.

What utter sinking of self it was !

How little we cared for the world of men !
For love's fair kingdom, and love's sweet laws,
Were all of the world and life to us then.

But a love like ours was a challenge to fate ;
She rang down the curtain and shifted the
scene ;

Yet sometimes now, when the day grows late,
I can hear you calling for Little Queen ;
For a happy home and a busy life

Can never wholly crowd out our past ;
In the twilight pauses that come from strife,
You will think of me while life shall last.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And however sweet the voice of fame
 May sing to me of a great world's praise,
I shall long sometimes for the old pet-name
 That you gave to me in the dear, dead
 days ;
And nothing the angel band can say,
 When I reach the shores of the great
 Unseen,
Can please me so much as on that day
 To hear your greeting of " Little Queen."

Wherefore

WHEREFORE in dreams are sorrows borne
 anew,
 A healed wound opened, or the past
 revived ?
Last night in my deep sleep I dreamed of
 you—
 Again the old love woke in me, and thrived
On looks of fire, and kisses, and sweet words
 Like silver waters purling in a stream,
Or like the amorous melodies of birds :
 A dream—a dream.

POEMS OF PASSION

Again upon the glory of the scene
 There settled that dread shadow of the
 cross
That, when hearts love too well, falls in
 between—
 That warns them of impending woe and
 loss,
Again I saw you drifting from my life,
 As barques are rudely parted in a stream ;
Again my heart was torn with awful strife :
 A dream—a dream.

Again the deep night settled on me there,
 Alone I groped, and heard strange waters
 roll.
Lost in that blackness of supreme despair
 That comes but once to any living soul.
Alone, afraid, I called your name aloud—
 Mine eyes, unveiled, behold white stars
 agleam,
And lo ! awake, I cried, " Thank God, thank
 God,
 A dream—a dream ! "

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Delilah

IN the midnight of darkness and terror,
When I would grope nearer to God,
With my back to a record of error
And the highway of sin I have trod,
There come to me shapes I would banish—
The shapes of the deeds I have done ;
And I pray and I plead till they vanish—
All vanish and leave me, save one.

That one, with 'a smile like the splendour
Of the sun in the middle-day skies—
That one, with a spell that is tender—
That one with a dream in her eyes—
Cometh close, in her rare southern beauty,
Her languor, her indolent grace ;
And my soul turns its back on its duty,
To live in the light of her face.

She touches my cheek, and I quiver—
I tremble with exquisite pains ;
She sighs—like an overcharged river
My blood rushes on through my veins ;

POEMS OF PASSION

She smiles—and in mad-tiger fashion,
As a she-tiger fondles her own,
I clasp her with fierceness and passion,
And kiss her with shudder and groan.

Once more, in our love's sweet beginning,
I put away God and the World ;
Once more, in the joys of our sinning,
Are the hopes of eternity hurled.
There is nothing my soul lacks or misses
As I clasp the dream-shape to my breast ;
In the passion and pain of her kisses
Life blooms to its richest and best.

O ghost of dead sin unrelenting,
Go back to the dust, and the sod !
Too dear and too sweet for repenting,
Ye stand between me and my God.
If I, by the Throne, should behold you,
Smiling up with those eyes loved so well,
Close, close in my arms I would fold you,
And drop with you down to sweet Hell !

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Change

CHANGED? Yes, I will confess it—I have
changed.

I do not love you in the old fond way.
I am your friend still—time has not estranged
One kindly feeling of that vanished day.

But the bright glamour which made life a
dream,

The rapture of that time, its sweet content,
Like visions of a sleeper's brain they seem—
And yet I cannot tell you how they went.

Why do you gaze with such accusing eyes
Upon me, dear? Is it so very strange
That hearts, like all things underneath God's
skies,
Should sometimes feel the influence of
change?

The birds, the flowers, the foliage of the trees,
The stars which seem so fixed, and so
sublime,
Vast continents, and the eternal seas—
All these do change, with ever-changing
time.

. POEMS OF PASSION

The face our mirror shows us year on year
Is not the same ; our dearest aim, or need,
Our lightest thought, or feeling, hope, or fear,
All, all the law of alternation heed.

How can we ask the human heart to stay,
Content with fancies of Youth's earliest
hours ?

The year outgrows the violets of May,
Although, maybe, there are no fairer
flowers.

And life may hold no sweeter love than this,
Which lies so cold, so voiceless, and so
dumb. •

And will I miss it, dear ? Why, yes, we miss
The violets always—till the roses come !

A Waltz-Quadrille

THE band was playing a waltz-quadrille,
I felt as light as a wind-blown feather,
As we floated away, at the caller's will,
Through the intricate, mazy dance to-
gether.

POEMS OF ELIA W. WILCOX.

Like mimic armies our lines were meeting,
Slowly advancing, and then retreating,
 All decked in their bright array ;
And back and forth to the music's rhyme
We moved together, and all the time
 I knew you were going away.

The fold of your strong arm sent a thrill
 From heart to brain as we gently glided
Like leaves on the wave of that waltz-
 quadrille ;
 Parted, met, and again divided—
You drifting one way, and I another,
Then suddenly turning and facing each other,
 Then off in the blithe *chassé*,
Then airily back to our places swaying,
While every beat of the music seemed saying
 That you were going away.

I said to my heart, " Let us take our fill
 Of mirth, and music, and love and laughter ;
For it all must end with this waltz-quadrille,
 And life will never be the same life after.
Oh, that the caller might go on calling,
Oh, that the music might go on falling,
, Like a shower of silver spray

POEMS OF PASSION

While we whirled on to the vast Forever,
Where no hearts break, and no ties sever,
And no one goes away."

A clamour, a crash, and the band was still,
'Twas the end of the dream, and the end of
the measure ;

The last low notes of that waltz-quadrille
Seemed like a dirge o'er the death of
Pleasure.

You said good-night, and the spell was over—
Too warm for a friend, and too cold for a
lover—

There was nothing else to say ;
But the lights looked dim, and the dancers
weary,

And the music was sad, and the hall was
dreary,
After you went away.

Tired

I AM tired to-night, and something,
The wind maybe, or the rain,
Or the cry of a bird in the copse outside,
Has brought back the past and its pain.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And I feel as I sit here thinking,
That the hand of a dead old June
Has reached out hold of my heart's loose
strings,
And is drawing them up in tune.

I am tired to-night, and I miss you,
And long for you, love, through tears ;
And it seems but to-day that I saw you go—
You, who have been gone for years.
And I seem to be newly lonely—
I, who am so much alone ;
And the strings of my heart are well in tune,
But they have not the same old tone.

I am tired ; and that old sorrow
Sweeps down the bed of my soul,
As a turbulent river might suddenly break
Away from a dam's control.
It beareth a wreck on its bosom,
A wreck with a snow-white sail,
And the hand on my heart-strings thrums
away,
But they only respond with a wail.

POEMS OF PASSION

Conversion

I HAVE lived this life as the sceptic lives it,
I have said the sweetness was less than the
gall,
Praising, nor cursing, the Hand that gives it,
I have drifted aimlessly through it all.
I have scoffed at the tale of a so-called
heaven,
I have laughed at the thought of a Supreme
Friend ;
I have said that it only to man was given
To live, to endure ; and to die was the
end. •

But now I know that a good God reigneth,
Generous-hearted, and kind and true ;
Since unto a worm like me He deigneth
To send so royal a gift as you.
Bright as a star you gleam on my bosom,
Sweet as a rose that the wild bee sips ;
And I know, my own, my beautiful blossom,
That none but a God could mould such
lips.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And I believe, in the fullest measure,
That ever a strong man's heart could
hold,
In all the tales of heavenly pleasure
By poets sung, or by prophets told ;
For in the joy of your shy, sweet kisses,
Your pulsing touch and your languid sigh,
I am filled and thrilled with better blisses
Than ever were claimed for souls on
high.

And now I have faith in all the stories
Told of the beauties of unscen lands ;
Of royal splendours and marvellous glories
Of the golden city not made with hands.
For the silken beauty of falling tresses,
Of lips all dewy and cheeks aglow,
With—what the mind in a half trance guesses
Of the twin perfection of drifts of snow.

Of limbs, like marble, of thigh and shoulder,
Carved like a statue in high relief—
These, as the eyes and the thoughts grow
bolder,
Leave no room for an unbelief.

POEMS OF PASSION

So my lady, my queen most royal,
My scepticism has passed away ;
If you're true to me, true and loyal,
I will believe till the Judgment-day.

Old and New

LONG have the poets vaunted, in their lays,
Old times, old loves, old friendship, and old
wine.

Why should the old monopolise all praise ?
Then let the new claim mine.

Give me strong new friends, when the old
prove weak,
Or fail me in my darkest hour of need ;
Why perish with the ship that springs a leak,
Or lean upon a reed ?

Give me new love, warm, palpitating, sweet,
When all the grace and beauty leaves the
old ;
When like a rose it withers at my feet,
Or like a hearth grows cold.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Give me new times, bright with a prosperous
cheer,

In place of old, tear-blotted, burdened days ;
I hold a sunlit present far more dear,
And worthy of my praise.

When the old creeds are threadbare, and
worn through,
And all too narrow for the broadening soul,
Give me the fine, firm texture of the new,
Fair, beautiful and whole !

Ad Finem

ON the white throat of the useless passion
That scorched my soul with its burning
breath,
I clutched my fingers in murderous fashion,
And gathered them close in a grip of death ;
For why should I fan, or feed with fuel,
A love that showed me but blank despair ?
So my hold was firm, and my grasp was
cruel—

I meant to strangle it then and there !

POEMS OF PASSION

I thought it was dead. But with no warning,
It rose from its grave last night, and
came
And stood by my bed till the early morning,
And over and over it spoke your name.
Its throat was red where my hands had held it,
It burned my brow with its scorching
breath ;
And I said, the moment my eyes beheld it,
"A love like this can know no death."

For just one kiss that your lips have given
In the lost and beautiful past to me,
I would gladly barter my hopes of Heaven
And all the bliss of Eternity.
For never a joy are the angels keeping
To lay at my feet in Paradise,
Like that of into your strong arms creeping,
And looking into your love-lit eyes.

I know, in the way that sins are reckoned,
This thought is a sin of the deepest dye ;
But I know, too, if an angel beckoned,
Standing close by the Throne on High,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And you adown by the gates infernal,
Should open your loving arms and smile,
I would turn my back on things supernal,
To lie on your breast a little while.

To know for an hour you were mine com-
pletely—
Mine in body and soul, my own—
I would bear unending tortures sweetly,
With not a murmur and not a moan.
A lighter sin or a lesser error
Might change through hope or fear divine;
But there is no fear, and hell has no terror
To change or alter a love like mine.

You Will Forget Me

You will forget me. The years are so tender,
They bind up the wounds which we think
are so deep ;
This dream of our youth will fade out as the
splendour
Fades from the skies when the sun sinks to
sleep ;

POEMS OF PASSION

The cloud of forgetfulness, over and
over

Will banish the last rosy colours away,
And the fingers of time will weave garlands
to cover

The scar which you think is a life-mark
to-day.

You will forget me. The one boon you
covet

Now above all things will soon seem no
prize,
And the heart, which you hold not in keeping
to prove it •

True or untrue, will lose worth in your
eyes.

The one drop to-day, that you deem only
wanting

To fill your life-cup to the brim, soon will
seem

But a valueless mite; and the ghost that is
haunting

The aisles of your heart will pass out with
the dream.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

You will forget me ; will thank me for
saying

The words which you think are 'so pointed
with pain.

Time loves a new lay ; and the dirge he is
playing

Will change for you soon to a livelier
strain.

I shall pass from your life—I shall pass out
forever,

And these hours we have spent will be
sunk in the past.

Youth buries its dead ; grief kills seldom or
never—

And forgetfulness covers all sorrows at last.

Progress

LET there be many windows to your soul,
That all the glory of the universe
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays
That shine from countless sources. Tear
away

POEMS OF PASSION

The blinds of superstition ; let the light
Pour through fair windows broad as Truth
itself
And high as God.

Why should the spirit peer
Through some priest-curtained orifice, and
grobe
Along dim corridors of doubt, when all
The splendour from unfathomed seas of
space
Might bathe it with the golden waves of
Love ?
Sweep up the débris of decaying faiths ;
Sweep down the cobwebs of worn-out beliefs,
And throw your soul wide open to the light
Of Reason and of Knowledge. Tune your
ear
To all the wordless music of the stars
And to the voice of Nature, and your heart
Shall turn to truth and goodness, as the plant
Turns to the sun. A thousand unseen
hands
Reach down to help you to their peace-
crowned heights,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And all the forces of the firmament
Shall fortify your strength. Be not afraid
To thrust aside half-truths and 'grasp the
whole.

Show Me the Way

SHOW me the way that leads to the true
life.

I do not care what tempests may assail me,
I shall be given courage for the strife,

I know my strength will not desert or fail
me ;

I know that I shall conquer in the fray :
Show me the way.

Show me the way up to a higher plane,
Where body shall be servant to the soul.

I do not care what tides of woe, or pain,
Across my life their angry waves may
roll

If I but reach the end I seek some day :
Show me the way.

POEMS OF PASSION

Show me the way, and let me bravely climb
Above vain grievings for unworthy treasures ;
Above all sorrow that finds balm in time—
Above small triumphs, or belittling pleasures ;
Up to those heights where these things seem
child's play :

Show me the way.

Show me the way to that calm, perfect peace
Which springs from an inward consciousness of right ;
To where all conflicts with the flesh shall
cease,
And self shall radiate with the spirit's light.
Though hard the journey and the strife, I
pray

Show me the way.

Solitude

LAUGH, and the world laughs with you ;
Weep, and you weep alone,
For sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
But has trouble enough of its own.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Sing, and the hills will answer ;
Sigh, it is lost on the air,
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you ;
Grieve, and they turn and go.
They want full measure of all your pleasure,
But they do not need your woe.
Be glad, and your friends are many ;
Be sad, and you lose them all—
There are none to decline your nectar'd
wine,
But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded ;
Fast, and the world goes by.
Succeed and give, and it helps you live,
But no man can help you die.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a large and lordly train,
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.

*The Beautiful
Land of Kot.*



POEMS OF PASSION

The Beautiful Land of Nod

COME, cuddle your head on my shoulder,
dear,

Your head like the golden-rod,
And we will go sailing away from here
To the beautiful Land of Nod.

Away from life's hurry, and flurry, and
worry,

Away from earth's shadows and gloom,
To a world of fair weather we'll float off
together

Where roses are always in bloom.

Just shut up your eyes, and fold your hands,

Your hands like the leaves of a rose,
And we will go sailing to those fair lands
That never an atlas shows.

On the North and the West they are bounded
by rest,

On the South and the East, by dreams ;
'Tis the country ideal, where nothing is
real,

But everything only seems.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Just drop down the curtains of your dear
eyes,

Those eyes like a bright blue-bell,
And we will sail out under starlit skies,
To the land where the fairies dwell.
Down the river of sleep, our barque shall sweep,
Till it reaches that mystical Isle
Which no man hath seen, but where all have
been,

And there we will pause awhile.
I will croon you a song as we float along,
To that shore that is blessed of God,
Then ho ! for that fair land, we're off for that
rare land,
That beautiful Land of Nod.

I Will be Worthy of It

I MAY not reach the heights I seek,
My untried strength may fail me ;
Or, half-way up the mountain peak
Fierce tempests may assail me.
But though that place I never gain,
Herein lies comfort for my pain—
I will be worthy of it.

POEMS OF PASSION

I may not triumph in success,
Despite my earnest labour ;
I may not grasp results that bless
The efforts of my neighbour.
But though my goal I never see,
This thought shall always dwell with me—
I will be worthy of it.

The golden glory of Love's light
May never fall on my way ;
My path may always lead through night,
Like some deserted by-way.
But though life's dearest joy I miss,
There lies a nameless strength in this—
I will be worthy of it.

Earnestness

THE hurry of the times affects us so
In this swift rushing hour, we crowd, and
press,
And thrust each other backward, as we go,
And do not pause to lay sufficient stress
Upon that good, strong, true word, Earnest-
ness.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

In our impetuous haste, could we but know
Its full, deep meaning, its vast import, oh,
Then might we grasp the secret of success !

In that receding age when men were great,
The bone, and sinew, of their purpose lay
In this one word. God likes an earnest
soul—
Too earnest to be eager. Soon or late
It leaves the spent horde breathless by the
way,
And stands serene, triumphant, at the goal.

A Pin

OH, I know a certain lady who is reckoned
with the good,
Yet she fills me with more terror than a
raging lion would.
The little chills run up and down my spine
whene'er we meet,
Though she seems a gentle creature, and
she's very trim and neat.

POEMS OF PASSION

And she has a thousand virtues and not one
acknowledged sin,

But she is the sort of person you could liken
to a pin.

And she pricks you and she sticks you in a
way that can't be said.

If you seek for what has hurt you—why, you
cannot find the head !

But she fills you with discomfort and exas-
perating pain.

If anybody asks you why, you really can't
explain !

A pin is such a tiny thing, of that there is no
doubt,

Yet when it's sticking in your flesh you're
wretched till it's out.

She's wonderfully observing—when she meets
a pretty girl,

She is always sure to tell her if her hair is out
of curl ;

And she is so sympathetic to her friend who's
much admired,

She is often heard remarking, "Dear, you
look so worn and tired."

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And she is an honest critic, for on yesterday
she eyed

The new dress I was airing with' a woman's
natural pride,

And she said, "Oh, how becoming!" and
then gently added, "it

Is really a misfortune that the basque is such
a fit."

Then she said, "If you had heard me yester
eve, I'm sure, my friend,

You would say I was a champion who knows
how to defend,"

And she left me with the feeling—most un-
pleasant, I aver—

That the whole world would despise me if it
hadn't been for her.

Whenever I encounter her, in such a name-
less way

She gives me the impression I am at my worst
that day.

And the hat that was imported (and which
cost me half a sonnet),

With just one glance from her round eyes
becomes a Bowery bonnet.

POEMS OF PASSION

She is always bright and smiling, sharp and
pointed for a thrust ;
Use does not seem to blunt her point, nor
does she gather rust.
Oh ! I wish some hapless specimen of man-
kind would begin
To tidy up the world for me, by picking up
this pin !

Now

ONE looks behind him to some vanished time,
And says, " Ah, I was happy then, alack !
I did not know it was my life's best prime—
Oh, if I could go back ! "

Another looks, with eager eyes aglow,
To some glad day of joy that yet will dawn,
And sighs, " I shall be happy then, I know ;
Oh, let me hurry on ! "

- But I—I look out on my fair To-day ;
I clasp it close, and kiss its radiant brow.
Here with the perfect present let me stay,
For I am happy now !

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Illogical

SHE stood beside me while I gave an order
for a bonnet.

She shuddered when I said, "And put a
bright bird's wing upon it."

A member of the Audubon Society was she ;
And cutting were her comments made on
worldly folks like me.

She spoke about the helpless birds we wickedly
were harming ;
She quoted the statistics, and they really
were alarming ;

She said God meant His little birds to sing
in trees and skies ;
And there was pathos in her voice, and
tears were in her eyes.

"Oh, surely in this beauteous world you
can find lovely things
Enough to trim your hats," she said, "with-
out the dear birds' wings."

POEMS OF PASSION

I sat beside her that same day, in her
own house at dinner,
Angelic being that she was, to entertain
a sinner !

Her well-appointed table groaned
beneath the ample spread,
Course followed appetising course, and
hunger sated fled ;

But still my charming hostess urged, " Do
have a reed-bird, dear ;
They are so delicate and sweet
at this time of the year."

Friendship after Love

AFTER the fierce midsummer all ablaze
Has burned itself to ashes, and expires
In the intensity of its own fires,
There come the mellow, mild, St. Martin days
Crowned with the calm of peace, but sad
with haze.

So after Love has led us, till he tires
Of his own throes, and torments, and
desires,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Comes large-eyed friendship : with a restful
gaze,

He beckons us to follow, and across

Cool verdant vales we wander free from
care.

Is it a touch of frost lies in the air ?

Why are we haunted with a sense of loss ?

We do not wish the pain back, or the
heat ;

And yet, and yet, these days are incomplete.

Reunited

Let us begin, dear love, where we left off ;

Tie up the broken threads of that old
dream ;

And go on happy as before ; and seem

Lovers again, though all the world may
scoff.

Let us forget the graves, which lie between

Our parting and our meeting, and the
tears

That rusted out the goldwork of the years |

The frosts that fell upon our gardens green. |

POEMS OF PASSION

Let us forget the cold malicious Fate
Who made our loving hearts her idle
toys,
And once more revel in the old sweet
joys
Of happy love. Nay, it is not too late!
Forget the deep-ploughed furrows in my
brow;
Forget the silver gleaming in my hair;
Look only in my eyes! Oh! darling,
there
The old love shone no warmer then than
now.

Down in the tender deeps of thy dear eyes,
I find the lost sweet memory of my
youth,
Bright with the holy radiance of thy
truth,
And hallowed with the blue of summer
skies.
Tie up the broken threads, and let us go
Like reunited lovers, hand in hand,
Back, and yet onward, to the sunny land,
Of our To Be, which was our Long Ago.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

But One

THE year has but one June, dear friend,
The year has but one June ;
And when that perfect month doth end,
The robin's song, though loud, though long,
Seems never quite in tune.

The rose, though still its blushing face
By bee and bird is seen,
May yet have lost that subtle grace—
'That nameless spell the winds know well—
Which makes it gardens' queen.

Life's perfect June, love's red, red rose,
Have burned and bloomed for me.
Though still youth's summer sunlight glows ;
Though thou art kind, dear friend, I find
I have no heart for thee.

Love Song

ONCE in the world's first prime,
When nothing lived or stirred—
Nothing but new-born Time—
Nor was there even a bird,

POEMS OF PASSION

The Silence spoke to a Star,
But I do not dare repeat
What it said to its love afar :
It was too sweet, too sweet.

But there, in the fair world's youth,
Ere sorrow had drawn breath,
When nothing was known but Truth,
Nor was there even death,
The Star to Silence was wed,
And the Sun was priest that day,
And they made their bridal-bed
High in the Milky Way.

For the great white star had heard
Her silent lover's speech ;
It needed no passionate word
To pledge them each to each.
O lady fair and far
Hear, oh, hear, and apply !
Thou the beautiful Star—
The voiceless Silence, I.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Desolation

I THINK that the bitterest sorrow or pain
Of love unrequited, or cold death's woe,
Is sweet, compared to that hour when we
know

That some grand passion is on the wane.

When we see that the glory, and glow, and
grace

Which lent a splendour to night and day
Are surely fading, and showing the grey
And dull groundwork of the commonplace.

When fond expressions on dull ears fall,
When the hands clasp calmly without one
thrill,

When we cannot muster by force of will
The old emotions that came at call.

When the dream has vanished we fain would
keep,

When the heart, like a watch, runs out
of gear,

And all the savour goes out of the year,
Oh, then is the time—if we could—to weep !

POEMS OF PASSION

But no tears soften this dull, pale woe,
We must sit and face it with dry, sad eyes.
If we seek to hold it, the swifter joy flies—
We can only be passive, and let it go.

Not Quite the Same

Nor quite the same the springtime seems
to me,
Since that sad season when in separate
ways
Our paths diverged. There are no more
such days
As dawned for us in that lost time when we
Dwelt in the realm of dreams, illusive
dreams ;
Spring may be just as fair now, but it
seems
Not quite the same.

Not quite the same is life, since we two
parted,
Knowing it best to go our ways alone.
Fair measures of success we both have
known,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And pleasant hours; and yet something
 departed
Which gold, nor fame, nor anything we win,
Can all replace. And either life has been
 Not quite the same.

Love is not quite the same, although each heart
 Has formed new ties, that are both sweet
 and true;
But that wild rapture, which of old we
 knew,
Seems to have been a something set apart
 With that lost dream. There is no
 passion, now,
Mixed with this later love, which seems,
 somehow,
 Not quite the same.

Not quite the same am I. My inner being
 Reasons and knows that all is for the best.
Yet vague regrets stir always in my breast,
As my soul's eyes turn sadly backward, seeing
 The vanished self, that evermore must be,
 This side of what we call eternity.
 Not quite the same.

POEMS OF PASSION

The Speech of Silence

THE solemn Sea of Silence lies between us ;
I know thou livest, and thou lovest me ;
And yet I wish some white ship would come
 sailing
Across the ocean, bearing word from thee.

The dead-calm awes me with its awful still-
 ness.

No anxious doubts or fears disturb my
 breast ;
I only ask some little wave of language,
 To stir this vast infinitude of rest.

I am oppressed with this great sense of
 loving ;
So much I give, so much receive from thee,
Like subtle incense, rising from a censer,
 So floats the fragrance of thy love round me.

All speech is poor, and written words un-
 meaning ;
Yet such I ask, blown hither by some wind,
To give relief to this too perfect knowledge,
 The Silence so impresses on my mind.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

How poor the love that needeth word or
message,
To banish doubt or nourish tenderness !
I ask them but to temper love's convictions
The Silence all too fully doth express.

Too deep the language which the spirit
utters ;
Too vast the knowledge which my soul
hath stirred ;
Send some white ship across the Sea of Silence
And interrupt its utterance with a word.

The Creed

WHOEVER was begotten by pure love,
And came desired and welcomed into life,
Is of immaculate conception. He
Whose heart is full of tenderness and truth,
Who loves mankind more than he loves
himself
And cannot find room in his heart for hate,
May be another Christ. We all may be

POEMS OF PASSION

The Saviours of the world, if we believe .
In the Divinity which dwells in us,
And worship it, and nail our grosser selves,
Our tempers, greeds, and our unworthy
 aims,
Upon the cross. Who giveth love to all
Pays kindness for unkindness, smiles for
 frowns,
And lends new courage to each fainting
 heart,
And strengthens hope and scatters joy
 abroad,
He too is a Redeemer, Son of God.

Love's Coming

SHE had looked for his coming as warriors
 come,
 With the clash of arms and the bugle's
 call ;
But he came instead with a stealthy tread,
 Which she did not hear at all.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

She had thought how his armour would blaze
 in the sun,
 As he rode like a prince to claim' his bride :
In the sweet dim light of the falling night
 She found him at her side.

She had dreamed how the gaze of his strange,
 bold eye
 Would wake her heart to a sudden glow :
She found in his face the familiar grace
 Of a friend she used to know.

She had dreamed how his coming would stir
 her soul,
 As the ocean is stirred by the wild storm's
 strife :
He brought her the balm of a heavenly calm,
 And a peace which crowned her life.

An Answer

If all the year was summer-time,
 And all the aim of life
Was just to lilt on like a rhyme—
 Then I would be your wife.

POEMS OF PASSION

If all the days were August days,
And crowned with golden weather,
How happy then through green-clad ways
We two ~~would~~ stray together !

If all the nights were moonlit nights,
And we had nought to do
But just to sit and plan delights,
Then would I wed with you.

If life was all a summer fête,
Its soberest pace the "glide,"
Then I would choose you for my mate,
And keep you at my side.

But winter makes full half the year,
And labour half of life,
And all the laughter and good cheer
Give place to wearing strife.

Days will grow cold, and moons wax old,
And then a heart that's true
Is better far than grace or gold—
And so, my love, adieu !
I cannot wed with you.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

My Friend

WHEN first I looked upon the face of Pain,
I shrunk repelled, as one shrinks from a foe
Who stands with dagger poised, as for a
blow.

I was in search of Pleasure and of Gain ;
I turned aside to let him pass : in vain ;
He looked straight in my eyes and would
not go.

"Shake hands," he said, "our paths are
one, and so
We must be comrades on the way, 'tis plain."

I felt the firm clasp of his hand on mine ;
Through all my veins it sent a strengthen-
ing glow.

I straightway linked my arm in his, and
lo !

He led me forth to joys almost divine ;
With God's great truths enriched me in
the end,
And now I hold him as my dearest friend.

POEMS OF PASSION

Art and Heart

THOUGH critics may bow to art, and I am its
own true lover,
It is not art, but heart, which wins the wide
world over.

Though smooth be the heartless prayer, no
ear in Heaven will mind it,
And the finest phrase falls dead, if there is no
feeling behind it.

Though perfect the player's touch, little if
any he sways us,
Unless we feel his heart throb through the
music he plays us.

Though the poet may spend his life in skil-
fully rounding a measure,
Unless he writes from a full warm heart, he
gives us little pleasure.

• So it is not the speech which tells, but the
impulse which goes with the saying,
And it is not the words of the prayer, but the
yearning back of the praying.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

It is not the artist's skill, which into our soul
comes stealing
With a joy that is almost pain, but it is the
player's feeling.

And it is not the poet's song, though sweeter
than sweet bells chiming,
Which thrills us through and through, but the
heart which beats under the rhyming.

And therefore I say again, though I am art's
own true lover,
That it is not art, but heart, which wins the
wide world over.

As by Fire

SOMETIMES I feel so passionate a yearning
For spiritual perfection here below,
This vigorous frame with healthful fervour
burning,
Seems my determined foe.

POEMS OF PASSION

So actively it makes a stern resistance,
So cruelly sometimes it wages war
Against a wholly spiritual existence
Which I am striving for.

It interrupts my soul's intense devotions,
Some hope it strangles of divinest birth,
With a swift rush of violent emotions
Which link me to the earth.

It is as if two mortal foes contended
Within my bosom in a deadly strife,
One for the loftier aims for souls intended,
One for the earthly life.

And yet I know this very war within me,
Which brings out all my will-power and
control,
This very conflict at the last shall win me
The loved and longed-for goal.

The very fire which seems sometimes so cruel
Is the white light, that shows me my own
strength.
A furnace, fed by the divinest fuel,
It may become at length.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Ah ! when in the immortal ranks enlisted,
I sometimes wonder if we shall not find
That not by deeds, but by what we've
resisted,
Our places are assigned.

Response

I SAID this morning, as I leaned and threw
My shutters open to the Spring's surprise,
"Tell me, O Earth, how is it that in you
Year after year the same fresh feelings rise ?
How do you keep your young exultant glee ?
No more those sweet emotions come to me.

"I note through all your fissures, how the
tide

Of healthful life goes leaping as of old.
Your royal dawns retain their pomp and
pride ;

Your sunsets lose no atom of their gold.
How can this wonder be ?" My soul's fine
ear

Leaned, listening, till a small voice answered
near—

POEMS OF PASSION

"My days lapse, never over into night ;
My nights encroach not on the rights of
dawn. [^]
I rush not breathless after some delight ;
I waste no grief for any pleasure gone.
My July noons burn not the entire year.
Heart, hearken well ! " Yes, yes ; go on ; I
hear.

"I do not strive to make my sunsets' gold
Pave all the dim and distant realms of space.
I do not bid my crimson dawns unfold
To lend the midnight a fictitious grace.
I break no law, for all God's laws are good.
Heart, hast thou heard ? " Yes, yes ; and
understood.

Life is Too Short

LIFE is too short for any vain regretting ;
Let dead delight bury its dead, I say,
And let us go upon our way forgetting
The joys, and sorrows, of each yesterday.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Between the swift sun's rising and its setting,
We have no time for useless tear or fretting,
Life is too short. ..

Life is too short for any bitter feeling ;
Time is the best avenger if we wait ;
The years speed by, and on their wings bear
healing,
We have no room for anything like hate.
This solemn truth the low mounds seem
revealing
That thick and fast about our feet are stealing,
Life is too short.

Life is too short for aught but high
deavour,—
Too short for spite, but long enough for love.
And love lives on for ever and for ever,
It links the worlds that circle on above ;
'Tis God's first law, the universe's lever,
In His vast realm the radiant souls sigh never
"Life is too short."

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The mighty sun sat, so supreme and great
With this same essence, one smile of its
face
Brought myriad forms of life forth ; race
on race
From insects up to men.
Through love, not hate,
All that is grand in nature or in art
Sprang into being. He who would build
sublime
And lasting works, to stand the test of
time,
Must inspiration draw from his full heart.
And he who loveth widely, well and
much,
The secret holds of the true master touch.

Sonnet

METHINKS oft-times my heart is like some bee,
That goes forth through the summer day
and sings,
And gathers honey from all growing things
In garden plot, or on the clover lea.

POEMS OF PASSION

When the long afternoon grows late, and she
Would seek her hive, she cannot lift her
wings,
So heavily the too sweet burden clings,
From which she would not, and yet would,
fly free.
So with my full fond heart ; for when it tries
To lift itself to peace-crowned heights,
above
The common way where countless feet
have trod,
Lo ! then, this burden of dear human ties,
This growing weight of precious earthly
love,
Binds down the spirit that would soar to
God.

Mockery

WHY do we grudge our sweets so to the living,
Who, God knows, find at best too much
of gall ;
And then with generous, open hands kneel,
giving
Unto the dead our all ?

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Why do we pierce the warm heart's sin or
sorrow,
With idle jests, or scorn, or cruel sneers,
And when it cannot know, on some to-
morrow,
Speak of its woe through tears?

What do the dead care for the tender token—
The love, the praise, the floral offerings?
But palpitating, living hearts are broken
For want of just these things.

Regret

THERE is a haunting phantom called Regret,
A shadowy creature robed somewhat like
Woe,
But fairer in the face, whom all men know
By her sad mien, and eyes for ever wet
No heart would seek her; but once having
met
All take her by the hand, and to and fro
They wander through those paths of long
ago—
' Those hallowed ways 'twere wiser to forget.

POEMS OF PASSION

One day she led me to that lost land's
gate

And bade me enter ; but I answered " No !
I will pass on with my bold comrade Fate ;

I have no tears to waste on thee—no
time—

My strength I hoard for heights I hope to
climb ;

No friend art thou, for souls that would be
great."

"Advice"

I MUST do as you do ? Your way I own

Is a very good way. And still, ♣ .

There are sometimes two straight roads to a
town,

One over, one under the hill.

You are treading the safe and the well-worn
way,

That the prudent choose each time ;
And you think me reckless and rash to-day
Because I prefer to climb.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Your path is the right one, and so is mine.

We are not like peas in a pod,
Compelled to lie in a certain line,
Or else be scattered abroad.

'Twere a dull old world, methinks, my friend,
If we all went just one way ;
Yet our paths will meet no doubt at the end,
Though they lead apart to-day.

You like the shade, and I like the sun ;
You like an even pace,
I like to mix with the crowd and run,
And then rest after the race.

I like danger, and storm and strife,
You like a peaceful time ;
I like the passion and surge of life,
You like its gentle rhyme.

You like buttercups, dewy sweet,
And crocuses, framed in snow ;
I like roses, born of the heat,
And the red carnation's glow.

POEMS OF PASSION

I must live my life, not yours, my friend,
For so it was written down ;
We must follow our given paths to the end,
But I trust we shall meet—in town.

Will

THERE is no chance, no destiny, no fate,
Can circumvent or hinder or control
The firm resolve of a determined soul.
Gifts count for nothing ; will alone is great ;
All things give way before it, soon or late.
What obstacle can stay the mighty force
Of the sea-seeking river in its course,
Or cause the ascending orb of day to wait ?
Each well-born soul must win what it
deserves.

Let the fool prate of luck. The fortunate
Is he whose earnest purpose never swerves,
Whose slightest action or inaction serves
The one great aim.

Why, even Death stands still,
And waits an hour sometimes for such a will.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

God's Measure

GOD measures souls by their capacity
For entertaining his best angel, Love.
Who lovest most is nearest kin to God,
Who is all Love, or Nothing.

He who sits
And looks out on the palpitating world,
And feels his heart swell in him large enough
To hold all men within it, he is near
His great Creator's standard, though he dwells
Outside the pale of churches, and knows
A feast-day from a fast-day, or a line
Of Scripture even. What God wants of us
Is that outstretching bigness that ignores
All littleness of aims, or loves, or creeds,
And clasps all Earth and Heaven in its embrace.

True Culture

THE highest culture is to speak no ill ;
The best reformer is the man whose eyes
Are quick to see all beauty and all worth ;

POEMS OF PASSION

And by his own discreet, well-ordered life,
Alone reproves the erring.

When thy gaze
Turns it on thine own soul, be most severe.
But when it falls upon a fellow-man
Let kindness control it ; and refrain
From that belittling censure that springs forth
From common lips like weeds from marshy
soil.

Beppo

WHY art thou sad, my Beppo ? But last eve,
Here at my feet, thy dear head on my
breast,

I heard thee say thy heart would no more
grieve

Or feel the olden *ennui* and unrest.

What troubles thee ? Am I not all thine
own—

I, so long sought, so sighed for and so dear ?
And do I not live but for thee alone ?

“Thou hast seen Lippo, whom I loved last
year !”

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Well, what of that? Last year is nought to
me—

'Tis swallowed in the ocean of the past.
Art thou not glad 'twas Lippo, and not thee,
Whose brief bright day in that great gulf
was cast?

Thy day is all before thee. Let no cloud,
Here in the very morn of our delight,
Drift up from distant foreign skies, to shroud
Our sun of love whose radiance is so bright.

"Thou art not first?" Nay, and he who
would be
Defeats his own heart's dearest purpose
then.
No truer truth was ever told to thee—
Who has loved most, he best can love again.

If Lippo (and not he alone) has taught
The arts that please thee, wherefore art
thou sad?
Since all my vast love-lore to thee is brought,
Look up and smile, my Beppo, and be
glad.

POEMS OF PLEASURE



POEMS OF PLEASURE

Surrender

Love, when we met, 'twas like two planets
meeting,
Strange chaos followed ; body, soul, and
heart
Seemed shaken, thrilled, and startled by that
greeting,
Old ties, old dreams, old aims, all torn
apart
And wrenched away, left nothing there the
while
But the great shining glory of your smile.

I knew no past ; 'twas all a blurred, bleak
waste.
I asked no future ; 'twas a blinding glare.
I only saw the present : as men taste
Some stimulating wine, and lose all care,
I tasted Love's elixir and I seemed
Dwelling in some strange land, like one who
dreamed.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

It was a godlike separate existence ;
Our world was set apart in some fair clime.
I had no will, no purpose, no resistance ;
I only knew I loved you for all time.
The earth seemed something foreign and afar,
And we two, sovereigns dwelling in a star !

It is so sad, so strange, I almost doubt
That all those years *could be* before we
met.
Do you not wish that we could blot them
out ?
Obliterate them wholly, and forget
That we had any part in life until
We clasped each other with Love's rapture
thrill ?

My being trembled to its very centre
At that first kiss. Cold Reason stood aside
With folded arms to let a grand Love enter
In my Soul's secret chamber to abide.
Its great High Priest, my first Love and my
last,
There on its altar I consumed my past.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

And all my life I lay upon its shrine
The best emotions of my heart and brain,
Whatever gifts and graces may be mine ;
No secret thought, no memory I retain,
But give them all for dear Love's precious
sake ;
Complete surrender of the whole I make.

The Way of It

THIS is the way of it, wide world over,
One is beloved, and one is the lover,
One gives and the other receives.
One lavishes all in a wild emotion,
One offers a smile for a life's devotion,
One hopes and the other believes.
One lies awake in the night to weep
And the other drifts off in a sweet sound
sleep.

One soul is aflame with a godlike passion,
One plays with love in an idler's fashion,
One speaks and the other hears.
One sobs "I love you," and wet eyes show it,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And one laughs lightly, and says "I know it,"
With smiles for the other's tears
One lives for the other and nothing beside,
And the other remembers the world is wide.

This is the way of it, sad earth over,
The heart that breaks is the heart of the
lover,

And the other learns to forget.
"For what is the use of endless sorrow?
Though the sun goes down, it will rise to-
morrow;
And life is not over yet."

Oh! I know this truth, if I know no other,
That passionate Love is Pain's own mother.

Angel or Demon

You call me an angel of love and of light,
A being of goodness and heavenly fire,
Sent out from God's kingdom to guide you
aright,
In paths where your spirit may mount and
aspire.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

You say that I glow like a star on its
 course,
Like a ray from the altar, a spark from the
 source.

Now list to my answer; let all the world hear it,
 I speak unafraid what I know to be true :—
A pure, faithful love is the creative spirit
 Which makes women angels! I live but
 in you.
We are bound soul to soul by life's holiest
 laws ;
If I am an Angel—why, you are the cause.

As my ship skims the sea, I look up from the
 deck,
 Fair, firm at the wheel shines Love's
 beautiful form,
And shall I curse the barque that last night
 went to wreck,
 By the Pilot abandoned to darkness and
 storm ?
My craft is no stauncher, she too had been
 lost—
Had the wheelman deserted, or slept at his post.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I laid down the wealth of my soul at your
feet

(Some woman does this for some man every
day).

No desperate creature who walks in the
street

Has a wickedder heart than I might have, I
say,

Had you wantonly misused the treasures you
won,

As so many men with heart riches have
done.

This fire from God's altar, this holy love-
flame

That burns like sweet incense for ever
for you,

Might now be a wild conflagration of
shame,

Had you tortured my heart, or been base
or untrue.

For angels and devils are cast in one
mould,

Till love guides them upward, or downward,
I hold.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

I tell you the women who make fervent
wives

And sweet tender mothers, had Fate been
less fair,

Are the women who might have abandoned
their lives

To the madness that springs from and ends
in despair.

As the fire on the hearth which sheds bright-
ness around,

Neglected, may level the walls to the ground.

The world makes grave errors in judging
these things :

Great good and great evil are born in one
breast.

Love horns us and hoofs us—or gives us our
wings,

And the best could be worst, as the worst
could be best.

You must thank your own worth for what I
grew to be,

For the demon lurked under the angel
in me.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Blasé

THE world has outlived all its passion,
Its men are inane and blasé,
Its women mere puppets of fashion ;
Life now is a comedy play.
Our Abelard sighs for a season,
Then yields with decorum to fate,
Our Héloïse listens to reason,
And seeks a new mate.

Our Romeo's flippant emotion
Grows pale as the summer grows old ;
Our Juliet proves her devotion
By clasping—a cup filled with gold.
Vain Anthony boasts of his favours
From fair Cleopatra the frail,
And the death of the sorceress savours
Less of asps than of ale.

With the march of bold civilisation,
Great loves and great faiths are down-
trodden,
They belonged to an era and nation
' All fresh with the imprint of God.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

High culture emasculates feeling,
The over-taught brain robs the heart,
And the shrine now where mortals are
 kneeling
Is a commonplace mart.

Our effeminate fathers and brothers
Keep carefully out of life's storm,
From the ladylike minds of our mothers
We are taught that to feel is "bad form."
Our worshippers now and our lovers
Are calmly devout with their brains,
And we laugh at the man who discovers
Warm blood in his veins.

But you, O twin souls, passion-mated,
Who love as the gods loved of old,
What blundering destiny fated
Your lives to be cast in this mould?
Like a lurid volcanic upheaval,
In pastures prosaic and grey,
You seem with your fervours primeval,
Among us to-day.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

You dropped from some planet of splendour
Perhaps as it circled afar,
And your constancy, swerveless and tender,
You learned from the course of that star.
Fly back to its bosom, I warn you—
As back to the ark flew the dove—
The minions of earth will but scorn you,
Because you can love.

Three and One

SOMETIMES she seems so helpless and so
mild,
So full of sweet unreason and so weak,
So prone to some capricious whim or
freak;
Now gay, now tearful, and now anger-wild,
By her strange moods of waywardness be-
guiled
And entertained, I stroke her pretty
cheek,
And soothing words of peace and comfort
speak;
And love her as a father loves a child.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Sometimes when I am troubled and sore
pressed

On every side by fast-advancing care,
She rises up with such majestic air,
I deem her soræ Olympian Goddess-guest,
Who brings my heart new courage, hope,
and rest ;

In her brave eyes dwells balm for my
despair,

And then I seem, while fondly gazing
there,

A loving child upon my Mother's breast.

Again, when her warm veins are full of life,
And youth's volcanic tidal wave of fire
Sends the swift mercury of her pulses
higher,

Her beauty stirs my heart to maddening
strife,

And all the tiger in my blood is rife ;

I love her with a lover's fierce desire,
And find in her my dream, complete,
entire,

Child, Mother, Mistress—all in one word—
Wife.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Inborn

As long as men have eyes wherewith to gaze,
 As long as men have eyes,
The sight of beauty to their sense shall be
As mighty winds are to a sleeping sea
 When stormy billows rise ;
And beauty's smile shall stir youth's ardent
 blood
As rays of sunlight burst the swelling bud,
 As long as men have eyes where-
 with to gaze.

As long as men have words wherewith to
 praise,
 As long as men have words,
They shall describe the softly-moulded breast,
Where Love and Pleasure make their downy
 nest,
 Like little singing birds ;
And lovely limbs, and lips of luscious fire,
Shall be the theme of many a poet's lyre,
 As long as men have words where-
 with to praise.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

As long as men have hearts that long for
homes,

As long as men have hearts,
Hid often like the acorn in the earth,
Their inborn love of noble woman's worth,
Beyond all beauty's arts,
Shall stem the sensuous current of desire,
And urge the world's best thought to some-
thing higher,
As long as men have hearts that
long for homes.

Two Prayers

HIS

DEAR, when you lift your gentle heart in
prayer,
Ask God to send His angel Death to me
Long ere he comes to you, if that may be.
I would dwell with you in that new life there,
But having, manlike, sinned, I must prepare,
By sad probation, ere I hope to see
Those upper realms which are at once
thrown free

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

To sweet, white souls like yours, unstained
and fair.

Time is so brief on earth, I well might spare
A few short years, if so I could atone
For my marred past, ere you are called
above.

My soul would glory in its own despair,
Till purified I met you at God's throne,
And entered on Eternities of Love.

HERS

Nay, Love, not so I frame my prayer to
God;

I want you close beside me to the end;
If it could be, I would have Him send
A simultaneous death, and let one sod
Cover our two hushed hearts. If you have
trod

Paths strange to me on earth, oh, let me
wend

My way with yours hereafter; let me
blend

My tears with yours beneath the chastening
rod

POEMS OF PLEASURE

If you must pay the penalty for sin,
In vales of darkness, ere you pass on
higher,
I will petition God to let me go.
I would not wait on earth, nor enter in
To any joys before you. I desire
No glory greater than to share your woe.

Love Much

Love much. Earth has enough of bitter in
it ;
Cast sweets into its cup whene'er you can.
No heart so hard, but love at last may win it ;
Love is the grand primeval cause of man ;
All hate is foreign to the first great plan.

Love much. Your heart will be led out to
slaughter,
On altars built of envy and deceit.
Love on, love on ! 'tis bread upon the water ;
It shall be cast in loaves yet at your feet,
Unleavened manna, most divinely sweet.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Love much. Your faith will be dethroned
and shaken,
Your trust betrayed by many a 'fair, false
lure.
Remount your faith, and let new trusts
awaken.
Though clouds obscure them, yet the stars
are pure ;
Love is a vital force and must endure.

Love much. Men's souls contract with cold
suspicion,
Shine on them with warm love, and they
expand.
'Tis love, not creeds, that from a low con-
dition
Leads mankind up to heights supreme and
grand.
Oh, that the world could see and under-
stand !

Love much. There is no waste in freely
giving ;
More blessed is it, even, than to receive.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

He who loves¹ much, alone finds life worth
living ;
Love on, through doubt and darkness ; and
believe
There is no¹ thing which Love may not
achieve.

One of Us Two

THE day will dawn, when one of us shall
harken
In vain to hear a voice that has grown
dumb.
And morns will fade, noons pale, and shadows
darken,
While sad eyes watch for feet that never
come.

One of us two must sometime face existence
Alone with memories that but sharpen pain.
And these sweet days shall shine back in the
distance,
Like dreams of summer dawns, in nights
of rain.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

One of us two, with tortured heart half
 broken,
 Shall read long-treasured letters through
 salt tears,
Shall kiss with anguished lips 'each cherished
 token,
 That speaks of these love-crowned, delicious
 years.

One of us two shall find all light, all beauty,
 All joy on earth, a tale for ever done ;
Shall know henceforth that life means only
 duty.
 Oh, God ! Oh, God ! have pity on that
 one.

Two Sinners

THERE was a man, it was said one time,
Who went astray in his youthful prime.
Can the brain keep cool and the heart keep
 quiet
When the blood is a river that's running riot ?
And boys will be boys the old folks say,
And a man is the better who's had his day.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

The sinner reformed ; and the preacher told
Of the prodigal son who came back to the
fold.

And Christian people threw open the door,
With a warmer welcome than ever before.
Wealth and honour were his to command,
And a spotless woman gave him her hand.
And the world strewed their pathway with
blossoms abloom,
Crying "God bless ladye, and God bless
groom !"

There was a maiden who went astray
In the golden dawn of her life's young day.
She had more passion and heart than head,
And she followed blindly where fond Love
led.

And Love unchecked is a dangerous guide
To wander at will by a fair girl's side.

The woman repented and turned from sin,
But no door opened to let her in.
The preacher prayed that she might be for-
given,
But told her to look for mercy—in heaven.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

For this is the law of the earth, we know :
That the woman is stoned, while the man
may go.

A brave man wedded her after all,
But the world said, frowning, "We shall not
call."

What Love Is

Love is the centre and circumference ;
The cause and aim of all things—'tis the key
To joy and sorrow, and the recompense
For all the ills that have been, or may be.

Love is as bitter as the dregs of sin,
As sweet as clover-honey in its cell ;
Love is the password whereby souls get in
To Heaven—the gate that leads, sometimes,
to Hell.

Love is the crown that glorifies ; the curse
That brands and burdens ; it is life and
death.

It is the great law of the universe ;
And nothing can exist without its breath.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Love is the impulse which directs the world,
And all things know it and obey its power.
Man, in the maelstrom of his passion whirled;
The bee that takes the pollen to the flower;

The earth, uplifting her bare, pulsing breast
To fervent kisses of the amorous sun ;—
Each but obeys creative Love's behest,
Which everywhere instinctively is done.

Love is the only thing that pays for birth,
Or makes death welcome. • Oh, dear God
above,
This beautiful but sad, perplexing earth,
Pity the hearts that know—or know not—
Love !

Constancy

I WILL be true. Mad stars forsake their
courses,
And, led by reckless meteors, turn away
From paths appointed by Eternal Forces ;
But my fixed heart shall never go astray.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Like those calm worlds whose sun-directed
motion

Is undisturbed by strife of wind or sea,
So shall my swerveless and serene devotion
Sweep on for ever, loyal unto thee.

I will be true. The fickle tide, divided
Between two wooing shores, in wild
unrest

May to and fro shift always undecided ;
Not so the tide of Passion in my breast.
With the grand surge of some resistless
river,

That hurries on, past mountain, vale, and
sea,
Unto the main, its water to deliver,
So my full heart keeps all its wealth for
thee.

I will be true. Light barques may be belated,
Or turned aside by every breeze at play,
While sturdy ships, well-manned and richly
freighted,
With fair sails flying, anchor safe in bay.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Like some firm rock, that, steadfast and un-
shaken,
Stands all unmoved when ebbing billows
flee,
So would my heart stand, faithful if forsaken—
I will be true, though thou art false to me.

Resolve

As the dead year is clasped by a dead
December,
So let your dead sins with your dead days
lie.
A new life is yours, and a new hope. Re-
member,
We build our own ladders to climb to the
sky.
Stand out in the sunlight of Promise, for-
getting
Whatever the Past held of sorrow or
wrong.
We waste half our strength in a useless re-
gretting ;
We sit by old tombs in the dark too long.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Have you missed in your aim? Well, the
mark is still shining.

Did you faint in the race? Well, take
breath for the next.

Did the clouds drive you back? But see
yonder their lining.

Were you tempted and fell? Let it serve
for a text.

As each year hurries by let it join that pro-
cession

Of skeleton shapes that march down to the
Past,

While you take your place in the line of
Progression,

With your eyes on the heavens, your face
to the blast.

I tell you the future can hold no terrors

For any sad soul while the stars revolve,
If he will stand firm on the grave of his
errors,

And instead of regretting, resolve, resolve.
It is never too late to begin rebuilding,
Though all into ruins your life seems
hurled,

POEMS OF PLEASURE

For see how • the light of the New Year
is gilding •
The wan, worn face of the bruised old
world.

Optimism

I'm no reformer ; for I see more light
Than darkness in the world ; mine eyes are
quick
To catch the first dim radiance of the dawn,
And slow to note the cloud that threatens
storm.
The fragrance and the beauty of the rose
Delight me so, slight thought I give its thorn ;
And the sweet music of the lark's clear song
Stays longer with me than the night hawk's
cry.
And e'en in this great throe of pain called
Life,
I find a rapture linked with each despair,
Well worth the price of Anguish. I detect
More good than evil in humanity.
Love lights more fires than hate extinguishes,
And men grow better as the world grows old.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Answered Prayers

I PRAYED for riches, and achieved success :
All that I touched turned into gold. Alas !
My cares were greater and my peace was
less,
When that wish came to pass.

I prayed for glory, and I heard my name
Sung by sweet children and by hoary men.
But ah ! the hurts—the hurts that come with
fame !
I was not happy then.

I prayed for Love, and had my heart's desire.
Through quivering heart and body, and
through brain
There swept the flame of its devouring fire,
And but the scars remain.

I prayed for a contented mind. At length
Great light upon my darkened spirit burst.
Great peace fell on me also, and great
strength—
Oh, had that prayer been first !



POEMS OF PLEASURE

A Lady of Tears

THROUGH valley and hamlet and city,
Wherever humanity dwells,
With a heart full of infinite pity,
A breast that with sympathy swells,
She walks in her beauty immortal.
Each household grows sad as she nears,
But she crosses at length every portal,
The mystical Lady of Tears.

If never this vision of sorrow
Has shadowed your life in the past,
You will meet her, I know, some to-morrow—
She visits all hearthstones at last.
To hovel, and cottage, and palace,
To servant and king she appears,
And offers the gall of her chalice—
The unwelcome Lady of Tears.

To the eyes that have smiled but in gladness,
To the souls that have basked in the sun,
She seems, in her garments of sadness,
A creature to dread and to shun.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And lips that have drunk but of pleasure
Grow pallid and tremble with fears,
As she portions the gall from her measure,
The merciless Lady of Tears.

But in midnight, lone hearts that are
quaking,
With the agonised numbness of grief,
Are saved from the torture of breaking,
By her bitter-sweet draught of relief.
Oh, then do all graces enfold her ;
Like the goddess she looks and appears,
And the eyes overflow that behold her—
The beautiful Lady of Tears.

Though she turns to lamenting all laughter,
Though she gives us despair for delight,
Life holds a new meaning thereafter,
For those who will greet her aright.
They stretch out their hands to each
other,
For Sorrow unites and endears,
The children of one tender mother—
The sweet, blessed Lady of Tears.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

. Secret Thoughts

I HOLD it true that thoughts are things
Endowed with bodies, breath, and wings,
And that we send them forth to fill
The world with good results—or ill.

That which we call our secret thought
Speeds to the earth's remotest spot,
And leaves its blessings or its woes
Like tracks behind it as it goes. ,

It is God's law. Remember it
In your still chamber as you sit
With thoughts you would not dare have
known,
And yet make comrades when alone.

These thoughts have life ; and they will fly
And leave their impress by-and-by,
Like some marsh breeze, whose poisoned
breath
Breathes into homes its fevered breath.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And after you have quite forgot
Or all outgrown some vanished thought,
Back to your mind to make its home,
A dove or raven, it will come.

Then let your secret thoughts be fair ;
They have a vital part and share
In shaping worlds and moulding fate—
God's system is so intricate.

There Comes a Time

THERE comes a time to every mortal being,
Whate'er his station or his lot in life,
When his sad soul yearns for the final freeing
From all this jarring and unceasing strife.

There comes a time, when, having lost its
savour,
The salt of wealth is worthless ; when the
mind
Grows wearied with the world's capricious
favour,
And sighs for something that it cannot
find.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

There comes a time, when, though kind
 friends are thronging
 About our pathway with sweet acts of
 grace,
We feel a vast and overwhelming longing
 For something that we cannot name or
 place.

There comes a time, when, with earth's best
 love by us,
 To feed the heart's great hunger and desire,
We find not even this can satisfy us ;
 The soul within us cries for something
 higher.

What greater proof need we that we inherit
 A life immortal in another sphere ?
It is the homesick longing of the spirit
 That cannot find its satisfaction here.

Necessity

NECESSITY, whom long I deemed my foe,
 Thou cold, unsmiling, and hard-visaged
 dame,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Now I no longer see thy face, I know
Thou wert my friend beyond reproach or
blame.

My best achievements and the fairest flights
Of my winged fancy were inspired by
thee ;
Thy stern voice stirred me to the mountain
heights ;
Thy importunings bade me do and be.

But for thy breath, the spark of living fire
Within me might have smouldered out at
length ;
But for thy lash which would not let me
tire,
I never would have measured my own
strength.

But for thine oft-times merciless control
Upon my life, that nerved me past
despair,
I never should have dug deep in my soul
And found the mine of treasures hidden
there.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

And though we walk divided pathways
now, •

And I no more may see thee, to the end,
I weave this little chaplet for thy brow,
That other hearts may know, and hail thee
friend.

Achievement

TRUST in thine own untried capacity
As thou wouldst trust in God Himself.

Thy soul

Is but an emanation from the whole.

Thou dost not dream what forces lie in thee,
Vast and unfathomed as the grandest sea.

Thy silent mind o'er diamond caves may
roll,

Go seek them—but let pilot will control
Those passions which thy favouring winds
can be.

No man shall place a limit in thy strength ;
Such triumphs as no mortal ever gained
May yet be thine if thou wilt but believe

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

In thy Creator and thyself. 'At length
Some feet will tread all heights now un-
attained—
Why not thine own? Press on; achieve!
achieve!

Belief

THE pain we have to suffer seems so broad,
Set side-by-side with this life's narrow
span,
We need no greater evidence that God
Has some diviner destiny for man.

He would not deem it worth His while to
send
Such crushing sorrows as pursue us here,
Unless beyond this fleeting journey's end
Our chastened spirits found another sphere.

So small this world! So vast its agonies!
A future life is needed to adjust
These ill-proportioned, wide discrepancies
Between the spirit and its frame of dust.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

So when my soul writhes with some aching
grief,

And all my heart-strings tremble at the
strain,

My Reason lends new courage to Belief,
And all God's hidden purposes seem plain.

Whatever Is—Is Best

I know as my life grows older

And mine eyes have clearer sight—

That under each rank wrong, somewhere

There lies the root of Right ;

That each sorrow has its purpose,

By the sorrowing oft unguessed,

But as sure as the sun brings morning,

Whatever is—is best.

I know that each sinful action,

As sure as the night brings shade,

Is somewhere, some time punished,

Tho' the hour be long delayed.

I know that the soul is aided

Sometimes by the heart's unrest,

And to grow means often to suffer—

But whatever is—is best.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I know there are no errors,
In the great Eternal plan,
And all things work together
For the final good of man.
And I know when my soul speeds onward
In its grand Eternal quest,
I shall say as I look back earthward,
Whatever is—is best.

Peace of the Goal

FROM the soul of a man who was homeless
Came the deathless song of home.
And the praises of rest are chanted best
By those who are forced to roam.

In a time of fast and hunger,
We can talk over feasts divine;
But the banquet done, why, where is the one
Who can tell you the taste of the wine?

We think of the mountain's grandeur
As we walk in the heat afar—
But when we sit in the shadows of it
We think how at rest we are.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

With the voice of the craving passions
We can picture a love to come.
But the heart once filled, lo, the voice is
stilled,
And we stand in the silence—dumb.

Desire

No joy for which thy hungering heart has
panted,
No hope it cherishes through waiting
years,
But if thou dost deserve it, shall be granted—
For with each passionate wish the blessing
nears.

Tune up the fine, strong instrument of thy
being
To chord with thy dear hope, and do not
tire.
When both in key and rhythm are agreeing,
Lo! thou shalt kiss the lips of thy
desire.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The thing thou cravest so 'waits in the
distance,

Wrapt in the silences, unseen and dumb :
Essential to thy soul and thy existence—

Live worthy of it—call, and ~~it~~ shall come.

Deathless

THERE lies, in the centre of each man's heart,
A longing and love for the good and pure ;
And if but an atom, or larger part,
I tell you this shall endure—endure—
After the body has gone to decay—
Yea, after the world has passed away.

The longer I live and the more I see
Of the struggle of souls toward the heights
above,
The stronger this truth comes home to me :
That the Universe rests on the shoulders of
love ;
A love so limitless, deep, and broad,
That men have renamed it and called it—
God.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

And nothing that ever was born or evolved,
Nothing created by light or force,
But deep in its system there lies dissolved
A shining drop from the Great Love
Source ;
A shining drop that shall live for aye—
Though kingdoms may perish and stars decay.

The Fault of the Age

THE fault of the age is a mad endeavour
To leap to heights that were made to
climb ;
By a burst of strength, of a thought most
clever,
We plan to forestall and outwit Time.

We scorn to wait for the thing worth
having ;
We want high noon at the day's dim
dawn ;
We find no pleasure in toiling and saving,
As our forefathers did in the old times
gone.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

We force our roses, before their season,
To bloom and blossom for us to wear ;
And then we wonder and ask the reason
Why perfect buds are so few and *rare*.

We crave the gain, but despise the getting ;
We want wealth — not as reward, but
dower ;
And the strength that is wasted in useless
fretting
Would fell a forest or build a tower.

To covet the prize, yet to shrink from the
winning ;
To thirst for glory, yet fear to fight ;
Why, what can it lead to at last, but sinning,
To mental languor and moral blight ?

Better the old slow way of striving,
And counting small gains when the year is
done,
Than to use our force and our strength in
contriving,
And to grasp for pleasure we have not
won.



POEMS OF PLEASURE

• Artist and Man •

MAKE thy life better than thy work. Too oft
Our artists spend their skill in rounding soft,
Fair curves upon their statues, while the
rough

And ragged edges of the unhewn stuff
In their own natures startle and offend
The eye of critic and the heart of friend.

If in thy too brief day thou must neglect
Thy labour or thy life, let men detect
Flaws in thy work ! while their most search-
ing gaze

Can fall on nothing which they may not
praise

In thy well-chiselled character. The Man
Should not be shadowed by the Artisan !

Babyland

HAVE you heard of the Valley of Babyland,
The realm where the dear little darlings
stay,
Till the kind storks go, as all men know,
And oh, so tenderly bring them away ?

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The paths are winding and past 'all finding,
By all save the storks who understand
The gates and the highways and the intricate
byways
That lead to Babyland.

All over the Valley of Babyland
Sweet flowers bloom in the soft green
moss;
And under the ferns fair, and under the
plants there,
Lie little heads like spools of floss.
With a soothing number the river of
slumber
Flows o'er a bedway of silver sand;
And angels are keeping watch o'er the
sleeping
Babes of Babyland.

The path to the Valley of Babyland
Only the kingly, kind storks know;
If they fly over mountains, or wade through
fountains,
No man sees them come or go.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

But an angel maybe, who guards some
 baby,
 Or a fairy perhaps, with her magic
 wand,
Brings them straightway to the wonderful
 gateway
 That leads to Babyland.

And there in the Valley of Babyland,
 Under the mosses and leaves and ferns,
Like an unfledged starling they find the dar-
 ling,
 For whom the heart of a mother yearns ;
And they lift him lightly, and snug him
 tightly
 In feathers soft as a lady's hand ;
And off with a rockaway step they walk
 away
 Out of Babyland.

As they go from the Valley of Babyland,
 Forth into the world of great unrest,
Sometimes in weeping he wakes from sleeping
 Before he reaches his mother's breast.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Ah! how shē blesses him, how 'she caresses
him,
Bonniest bird in the bright home band
That o'er land and water, the kind stork
brought her
From far-off Babyland.

A Face

BETWEEN the curtains of snowy lace,
Over the way is a baby's face ;
It peeps forth, smiling in merry glee,
And waves its pink little hand at me.

My heart responds with a lonely cry—
But in the wonderful Bye-and-Bye—
Out from the window of God's "To Be,"
That other baby shall beckon to me.

That ever haunting and longed-for face,
That perfect vision of infant grace,
Shall shine on me in a splendour of light,
Never to fade from my eager sight.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

All that was taken shall be made good ;
All that puzzles me understood ;
And the wee white hand that I lost, one day,
Shall lead me into the Better Way.

Entre-acte Reveries

BETWEEN the acts while the orchestra played
That sweet old waltz with the lilting
measure,
I drifted away to a dear dead day,
When the dance, for me, was the sum of
all pleasure ;
When my veins were rife with the fever of
life,
When hope ran high as an inswept ocean,
And my heart's great gladness was almost
madness,
As I floated off to the music's motion.

How little I cared for the world outside !
How little I cared for the dull day after !
The thought of trouble went up like a bubble,
And burst in a sparkle of mirthful laughter,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Oh ! and the beat of it, oh ! 'and the sweet
of it—
Melody, motion, and young blood melted ;
The dancers swaying, the players playing,
The air song-deluged and music-pelted.

I knew no weariness, no, not I—
My step was as light as the waving
grasses
That flutter with ease on the strong-armed
breeze,
As it waltzes over the wild morasses.
Life was all sound and swing ; youth was a
perfect thing ;
Night was the goddess of satisfaction.
Oh, how I tripped away, right to the edge of
day !
Joy lay in motion, and rest lay in action.

I dance no more on the music's wave,
I yield no more to its wildering power,
That time has flown like a rose that is
blown,
Yet life is a garden forever in flower.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Though storms of tears have watered the years,
Between to-day and the day departed,
Though trials have met me, and grief's waves
wet me,
And I have been tired and trouble-hearted.

Though under the sod of a wee green grave,
A great, sweet hope in darkness perished,
Yet life, to my thinking, is a cup worth
drinking,
A gift to be glad of, and loved, and
cherished.
There is deeper pleasure in the slower
measure
That Time's grand orchestra now is playing.
Its mellowed minor is sadder but finer,
And life grows daily more worth the
living.

A Plea

COLUMBIA, large-hearted and tender,
Too long for the good of your kin
You have shared your home's comfort and
splendour
With all who have asked to come in.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The smile of your true eyes has lighted
The way to your 'wide-open door.
You have held out full hands, and invited
The beggar to take from your store.

Your overrun proud sister nations,
Whose offspring you help them to keep,
Are sending their poorest relations,
Their unruly vicious black sheep ;
Unwashed and unlettered you take them,
And lo ! we are pushed from your
knee ;
We are governed by laws as they make
them,
We are slaves in the land of the free.

Columbia, you know the devotion
Of those who have sprung from your
soil ;
Shall aliens, born over the ocean,
Dispute us the fruits of our toil ?
Most noble and gracious of mothers,
Your children rise up and demand
That you bring us no more foster-brothers,
To breed discontent in the land.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Be prudent before you are zealous, '
Not generous only—but just.
Our hearts are grown wrathful and jealous
Toward those who have outraged your
trust.
They jostle and crowd in our places,
They sneer at the comforts you gave.
We say, shut the door in their faces—
Until they have learned to behave !

In hearts that are greedy and hateful,
They harbour ill-will and deceit ;
They ask for more favours, ungrateful
For those you have poured at their feet.
Rise up in your grandeur, and straightway
Bar out the bold, clamouring mass ;
Let sentinels stand at your gateway,
To see who is worthy to pass.

Give first to your own faithful toilers
The freedom our birthright should claim,
And take from these ruthless despoilers
The power which they use to our
shame.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Columbia, too long have you 'dallied
With foes whom you feed from your store ;
It is time that your wardens were rallied,
And stationed outside the locked door.

The Room beneath the Rafters

SOMETIMES when I have dropped to sleep,
Draped in a soft luxurious gloom,
Across my drowsing mind will creep
The memory of another room,
Where resinous knots in roof boards made
A frescoping of light and shade,
And sighing poplars brushed their leaves
Against the humbly sloping eaves.

Again I fancy, in my dreams,
I'm lying in my trundle bed ;
I seem to see the bare old beams
And unhewn rafters overhead.
The mud-wasp's shrill falsetto hum
I hear again, and see him come
Forth from his dark-walled hanging house,
Dressed in his black and yellow blouse.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

There, summer dawns, in sleep I stirred,
And wove into my fair dream's woof
The chattering of a martin bird,
Or raindrops pattering on the roof,
Or half awake, and half in fear,
I saw the spider spinning near
His pretty castle where the fly
Should come to ruin by and by.

And there I fashioned from my brain
Youth's shining structures in the air,
I did not wholly build in vain,
For some were lasting, firm and fair.
And I am one who lives to say
My life has held more gold than grey,
And that the splendour of the real
Surpassed my early dream's ideal.

But still I love to wander back
To that old time and that old place ;
To tread my way o'er memory's track,
And catch the early morning grace,
In that quaint room beneath the rafter
That echoed to my childish laughter ;
To dream again the dreams that grew
More beautiful as they came true.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

An Old Fan

(TO KITTY, HER REVERIE)

It is soiled and quite passé, '
Broken too, and out of fashion,
But it stirs my heart some way,
As I hold it here to-day,
With a dead year's grace and passion.
Oh, my pretty fan !

Precious dream and thrilling strain,
Rise up from that vanished season ;
Back to heart and nerve and brain
Sweeps the joy as keen as pain,
Joy that asks no cause or reason.
Oh, my dainty fan !

Hopes that perished in a night
Gaze at me like spectral faces ;
Grim despair and lost delight,
Sorrow long since gone from sight—
All are hiding in these laces.
Oh, my broken fan !



POEMS OF PLEASURE

Let us lay the thing away—
I am sadder now, and older ;
Fled the ballroom and the play—
You have had your foolish day,
And the night and life are colder.
Exit—little fan !

No Classes !

No classes here ! Why, that is idle talk,
The village beau sneers at the country
boor ;
The importuning mendicants who walk
Our cities' streets despise the parish poor.

The daily toiler at some noisy loom
Holds back her garments from the kitchen
aid.
Meanwhile the latter leans upon her broom,
Unconscious of the bow the laundress made.

The grocer's daughter eyes the farmer's lass
With haughty glances ; and the lawyer's
wife
Would pay no visits to the trading class,
If policy were not her creed in life.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The merchant's son nods coldly at the clerk ;
The proud possessor of a pedigree
Ignores the youth whose father rose by work ;
The title-seeking maiden scorns all three.

The aristocracy of blood looks down
Upon the "nouveau riche" ; and in disdain,
The lovers of the intellectual frown
On both, and worship at the shrine of
brain.

"No classes here," the clergyman has said ;
"We are one family." Yet see his rage
And horror when his favourite son would
wed
Some pure and pretty player on the stage.

It is the vain but natural human way
Of vaunting our weak selves, our pride,
our worth !
Not till the long delayed millennial day
Shall we behold "no classes" on God's
earth.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

A Grey Mood

As we hurry away to the end, my friend,
Of this sad little farce called existence,
We are sure that the future will bring one
thing,
And that is the grave in the distance.
And so when our lives run along all wrong,
And nothing seems real or certain,
We can comfort ourselves with the thought
(or not)
Of that spectre behind the curtain.

•

But we haven't much time to repine or
whine,
Or to wound or jostle each other ;
And the hour for us each is to-day, I say,
If we mean to assist a brother.
And there is no pleasure that earth gives
birth,
But the worry it brings is double ;
And all that repays for the strife of life,
Is helping some soul in trouble.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I tell you, if I could go back the track
To my life's morning hour,
I would not set forth seeking name or fame,
Or that poor bauble called power.
I would be like the sunlight, and live to give ;
I would lend, but I would not borrow ;
Nor would I be blind and complain of pain,
Forgetting the meaning of sorrow.

This world is a vaporous jest at best,
Tossed off by the gods in laughter ;
And a cruel attempt at wit were it,
If nothing better came after.
It is reeking with hearts that ache and break,
Which we ought to comfort and strengthen,
As we hurry away to the end, my friend,
And the shadows behind us lengthen.

At an Old Drawer

BEFORE this scarf was faded,
What hours of mirth it knew !
How gaily it paraded
For smiling eyes to view !

POEMS OF PLEASURE

The days were tinged with glory,
The nights too quickly sped,
And life was like a story
Where all the people wed.

Before this rosebud wilted,
How passionately sweet
The wild waltz swelled and lilted
In time for flying feet !
How loud the bassoons muttered !
The horns grew madly shrill ;
And oh ! the vows lips uttered
That hearts could not fulfil.

Before this fan was broken,
Behind its lace and pearl
What whispered words were spoken
What hearts were in a whirl !
What homesteads were selected
In Fancy's realm of Spain !
What castles were erected,
Without a room for pain !

When this old glove was mated,
How thrilling seemed the play !
Maybe our hearts are sated—
They tire so soon to-day.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Oh, shut away those treasures,
They speak the dreary truth—
We have outgrown the pleasures
And keen delights of youth.

The City

I OWN the charms of lovely Nature ; still,
In human nature more delight I find.
Though sweet the murmuring voices of the
rill,
I much prefer the voices of my kind.

"

I like the roar of cities. In the mart,
Where busy toilers strive for place and
gain,
I seem to read humanity's great heart,
And share its hopes, its pleasures, and its
pain.

"

The rush of hurrying trains that cannot wait,
The tread of myriad feet, all say to me :
" You are the architect of your own fate ;
Toil on, hope on, and dare to do and be."



The City

POEMS OF PLEASURE

I like the jangled music of the loud
Bold bells ; the whistle's sudden shrill
réply ;
And there is inspiration in a crowd—
A magnetism flashed from eye to eye.

My sorrows all seem lightened and my joys
Augmented when the comrade world walks
near ;
Close to mankind my soul best keeps its poise.
Give me the great town's bustle, strife, and
noise,
And let who will, hold Nature's calm more
dear.

Woman

GIVE us that grand word "woman" once
again,
And let's have done with "lady" : one's a
term
Full of fine force, strong, beautiful, and firm,
Fit for the noblest use of tongue or pen ;

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And one's a word for lackeys. One suggests
The Mother, Wife, and Sister! 'One the
dame
Whose costly robe, mayhap, gives her the
name.
One word upon its own strength leans and
rests ;
The other minces tiptoe. Who would be
The perfect woman must grow brave of
heart
And broad of soul to play her troubled
part
Well in life's drama. While each day we
see
The "perfect lady" skilled in what to do
And what to say, grace in each tone and
act
('Tis taught in schools, but needs some native
tact),
Yet narrow in her mind as in her shoe.
Give the first place then to the nobler
phrase,
And leave the lesser word for lesser praise.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

The Lost Land

THERE is a story of a beauteous land,
Where fields were fertile and where flowers
were bright ;
Where tall towers glistened in the morning
light,
Where happy children wandered hand in
hand,
Where lovers wrote their names upon the
sand.
They say it vanished from all human sight,
The hungry sea devoured it in a night.

You doubt the tale ? ah, you will under-
stand ;
For, as men muse upon that fable old,
They give sad credence always at the last,
However they have cavilled at its truth,
When with a tear-dimmed vision they be-
hold,
Swift sinking in the ocean of the Past,
The lovely lost Atlantis of their Youth.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Life's Journey

As we speed out of youth's sunny station
The track seems to shine in the light,
But it suddenly shoots over chasms
Or sinks into tunnels of night.
And the hearts that were brave in the
morning
Are filled with repining and fears,
As they pause at the City of Sorrow
Or pass through the Valley of Tears.

But the road of this perilous journey
The hand of the Master has made ;
With all its discomforts and dangers,
We need not be sad or afraid.
Paths leading from light into darkness,
Ways plunging from gloom to despair,
Wind out through the tunnels of midnight
To fields that are blooming and fair.

Though the rocks and the shadows surround us,
Though we catch not one gleam of the day,
Above us fair cities are laughing,
And dipping white feet in some bay.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

And always, eternal, for ever, '
 Down over the hills in the west,
The last final end of our journey,
 There lies the great Station of Rest.

'Tis the Grand Central point of all railways,
 All roads unite here when they end ;
'Tis the final resort of all tourists,
 All rival lines meet here and blend.
All tickets, all seasons, all passes,
 If stolen or begged for or bought,
On whatever road or division,
 Will bring you at last to this spot.

If you pause at the City of Trouble,
 Or wait in the Valley of Tears,
Be patient, the train will move onward,
 And rush down the track of the years.
Whatever the place is you seek for,
 Whatever your game or your quest,
You shall come at the last with rejoicing
 To the beautiful City of Rest.

You shall store all your baggage of worries,
 You shall feel perfect peace in this realm,
You shall sail with old friends on fair waters,
 With joy and delight at the helm.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

You shall wander in cool, fragrant gardens
With those who have loved you the best,
And the hopes that were lost in life's journey
You shall find in the City of Rest.

The Actor

OH, man, with your wonderful dower,
Oh, woman, with genius and grace,
You can teach the whole world with your
power,

If you are but worthy the place.
The stage is a force and a factor
In moulding the thought of the day,
If only the heart of the actor
Is high as the theme of the play.

No discourse or sermon can reach us
Through feeling to reason like you ;
No author can stir us and teach us
With lessons as subtle and true.
Your words and your gestures obeying,
We weep or rejoice with your part,
And the player, behind all his playing,
He ought to be great as his art.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

No matter what rôle you are giving,
No matter what skill, you betray,
The everyday life you are living,
Is certain to colour the play.
The thoughts we call secret and hidden
Are creatures of malice, in fact ;
They steal forth unseen and unbidden,
And permeate motive and act.

The genius that shines like a comet
Fills only one part of God's plan,
If the lesson the world derives from it
Is marred by the life of the man.
Be worthy your work if you love it ;
The king should be fit for the crown ;
Stand high as your art, or above it,
And make us look up and not down.

New Year

As the old year sinks down in Time's ocean,
Stand ready to launch with the new,
And waste no regrets, no emotion,
As the masts and the spars pass from view.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Weep not if some treasures go under,
And sink in the rotten ship's hold,
That blithe, bonny barque sailing yonder
May bring you more wealth than the old.

For the world is for ever improving,
All the past is not worth one to-day,
And whatever deserves our true loving,
Is stronger than death or decay.
Old love, was it wasted devotion?
Old friends, were they weak or untrue?
Well, let them sink there in mid ocean,
And gaily sail on to the new.

Throw overboard toil misdirected,
Throw overboard ill-advised hope,
With aims which, your soul has detected,
Have self as their centre and scope.
Throw overboard useless regretting
For deeds which you cannot undo,
And learn the great art of forgetting
Old things which embitter the new.

Sing who will of dead years departed,
I shroud them and bid them adieu,
And the song that I sing, happy-hearted,
Is a song of the glorious new.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Peace and Love

THERE are two angels, messengers of light,
Both born of God, who yet are bitterest
foes. •

No human breast their dual presence knows.
As violently opposed as wrong and right,
When one draws near, the other takes swift
flight,
And when one enters, thence the other
goes. ’

Till mortal life in the immortal flows,
So must these two avoid each other's sight.
Despair and hope may meet within one
heart,
The vulture may be comrade to the dove !
Pleasure and Pain swear friendship leal and
true :

But till the grave unites them, still apart
Must dwell these angels known as Peace and
Love,
For only Death can reconcile the two.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The Instructor

Not till we meet with Love in all his
 beauty,
In all his solemn majesty and worth,
Can we translate the meaning of life's duty,
Which God oft writes in cipher at our
 birth.

Not till Love comes in all his strength and
 terror
Can we read others' hearts ; not till then
 know
A wide compassion for all human error,
Or sound the quivering depths of mortal
 woe.

Not till we sail with him o'er stormy
 oceans,
Have we seen tempests ; hidden in his
 hand
He holds the keys to all the great emotions ;
Till he unlocks them, none can under-
 stand.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Not till we walk with him on lofty mountains
Can we quite measure heights. And, O
sad truth !

When once we drink from his immortal
fountains,

We bid farewell to the light heart of youth.

Thereafter our most perfect day will borrow
A dimming shadow from some dreaded
night ;

So great grows joy it merges into sorrow,
And evermore pain tinctures our delight.

Immortality

IMMORTAL life is something to be earned,
By slow self-conquest, comradeship with Pain,
And patient seeking after higher truths.
We cannot follow our own wayward wills,
And feed our baser appetites, and give
Loose rein to foolish tempers year on year,
And then cry, "Lord, forgive me, I believe!"
And straightway bathe in glory. Men must
learn

God's system is too grand a thing for that.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The spark divine dwells in our souls, and
we

Can fan it to a steady flame of light,
Whose lustre gilds the pathway to the tomb,
And shines on through Eternity, or else
Neglect it till it glimmers down to Death,
And leaves us but the darkness of the grave.
Each conquered passion feeds the living flame;
Each well-borne sorrow is a step towards
God;

Faith cannot rescue, and no blood redeem
The soul that will not reason and resolve.
Lean on thyself, yet prop thyself with prayer
(All hope is prayer; who calls it hope no
more,

Sends prayer footsore forth over weary
wastes,

While he who calls it prayer gives wings to
hope),

And there are spirits, messengers of Love,
Who come at call and fortify our strength.
Make friends with them, and with thine inner
self;

Cast out all envy, bitterness, and hate;
And keep the mind's fair tabernacle pure.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

Shake hands with Pain, give greeting unto
Grief,
Those angels in disguise, and thy glad soul
From height to height, from star to shining
star,
Shall climb and claim blest immortality.

The World

With noiseless steps good goes its way ;
The earth shakes under evil's tread.
We hear the uproar, and 'tis said,
The world grows wicked every day.

It is not true. With quiet feet,
In silence, Virtue sows her seeds ;
While Sin goes shouting out his deeds,
And echoes listen and repeat.

But surely as the old world moves,
And circles round the shining sun,
So surely does God's purpose run,
And all the human race improves.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Despite bold evil's noise and stir,
Truth's golden harvests ripen fast ;
The Present far outshines the Past ;
Men's thoughts are higher than they were.

Who runs may read this truth, I say :
Sin travels in a rumbling car,
While Virtue soars on like a star—
The world grows better every day.

Keep Out of the Past

KEEP out of the Past ! for its highways
Are damp with malarial gloom ;
Its gardens are sere and its forests are drear,
And everywhere moulders a tomb.
Who seeks to regain its lost pleasures
Finds only a rose turned to dust ;
And its storehouse of wonderful treasures
Are covered and coated with rust.

Keep out of the Past. It is haunted :
He who in its avenues gropes
Shall find there the ghost of a joy prized the
most,
And a skeleton throng of dead hopes.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

In place of its beautiful rivers,
Are pools that are stagnant with slime ;
And these graves gleaming white in a phosphoric light,
Hide dreams that were slain in their prime.

Keep out of the Past. It is lonely,
And barren and bleak to the view ;
Its fires have grown cold, and its stories are old—

Turn, turn to the Present—the New ;
To-day leads you up to the hill-tops
That are kissed by the radiant sun,
To-day shows no tomb, life's hopes are in bloom,
And to-day holds a prize to be won.

POEMS OF ELLA: W. WILCOX

Distrust

DISTRUST that man who tells you to distrust;
He takes the measure of his own small soul,
And thinks the world no larger. He who prates
Of human nature's baseness and deceit
Looks in the mirror of his heart, and sees
His kind therein reflected. Or perchance
The honeyed wine of life was turned to gall
By sorrow's hand, which brimmed his cup
with tears,
And made all things seem bitter to his taste.
Give him compassion ! But be not afraid
Of nectared Love, or Friendship's strengthening draught,
Nor think a poison underlies their sweets.
Look through true eyes—you will discover truth;
Suspect suspicion, and doubt only doubt.

POEMS OF PLEASURE

The Soul's Farewell to the Body

So we must part for ever ; and although
I long have beat my wings and cried to go,
Free from your narrow limiting control,
Forth into space, the true home of the soul.

Yet now, yet now that hour is drawing near,
I pause reluctant, finding you so dear.
All joys await me in the realm of God—
Must you, my comrade, mould'ring in the sod ?

I was your captive, yet you were my slave :
Your prisoner, yet obedience you gave
To all my earnest wishes and commands.
Now to the worm I leave those willing
hands

That toiled for me or held the books I read,
Those feet that trod where'er I wished to
tread,
Those arms that clasped my dear ones, and
the breast
On which one loved and loving heart found
rest,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Those lips through which my prayers to God
have risen,
Those eyes that were the windows to my
prison.
From these, all these, Death's Angel bids me
sever ;
Dear Comrade Body, fare thee well for
ever !

I go to my inheritance, and go
With joy that only the freed soul can know ;
Yet in my spirit wanderings I trust
I may sometimes pause near your sacred dust.

Refuted

"Anticipation is sweeter than realisation"

It may be, yet I have not found it so.
In those first golden dreams of future
fame
I did not find such happiness as came
When toil was crowned with triumph. Now
I know

POEMS OF PLEASURE

My words have recognition, and will go
Straight to some listening heart, my early
aim,
To win the idle glory of a name,
Pales like a candle in the noonday's glow.

So with the deeper joys of which I dreamed :
Life yields more rapture than did child-
hood's fancies,
And each year brings more pleasure than I
waited.
Friendship proves truer than of old it seemed,
And, all beyond youth's passion-hued
romances,
Love is more perfect than anticipated.

POEMS OF LIFE



A Song of Life

In the rapture of life and of living,
I lift up my heart and rejoice,
And I thank the great Giver for giving
The soul of my gladness a voice.
In the glow of the glorious weather,
In the sweet-scented sensuous air,
My burdens seem light as a feather—
They are nothing to bear. •

In the strength and the glory of power,
In the pride and the pleasure of wealth
(For who dares dispute me my dower
Of talents and youth-time and health ?)
I can laugh at the world and its sages—
I am greater than seers who are sad,
For he is most wise in all ages
Who knows how to be glad.

I lift up my eyes to Apollo,
The god of the beautiful days,
And my spirit soars off like a swallow
And is lost in the light of its rays.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Are you troubled and sad? I beseech you
Come out of the shadows of strife—
Come out in the sun while I teach you
The secret of life.

Come out of the world—come above it—
Up over its crosses and graves.
Though the green earth is fair and I love it,
We must love it as masters, not slaves.

Come up where the dust never rises—
But only the perfume of flowers—
And your life shall be glad with surprises
Of beautiful hours.

Come up where the rare golden wine is
Apollo distils in my sight,
And your life shall be happy as mine is,
And as full of delight.

. Nothing but Stones

I THINK I never passed so sad an hour,
Dear friend, as that one at the church
to-night.

POEMS OF LIFE

The edifice from basement to the tower
Was one resplendent blaze of coloured
light.

Up through broad aisles the stylish crowd
was thronging,
Each richly robed like some king's bidden
guest.

"Here will I bring my sorrow and my
longing,"
I said, "and here find rest."

I heard the heavenly organ's voice of
thunder,

It seemed to give me infinite relief.

I wept. Strange eyes looked on in well-bred
wonder,

I dried my tears : their gaze profaned my
grief.

Wrapt in the costly furs, and silks and
laces

Beat alien hearts that had no part with
me.

I could not read, in all those proud cold
faces,

One thought of sympathy.

POEMS OF LIFE

Ah, friend, my friend ! one true heart, fond
and tender,
That understands our troubles and our
needs,
Brings us more near to God than all the
splendour
And pomp of seeming worship and vain
creeds.
One glance of thy dear eyes, so full of feeling,
Doth bring me closer to the Infinite
Than all that throng of worldly people kneel-
ing
In blaze of gorgeous light.

Gethsemane

In golden youth when seems the earth
A Summer-land of singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,
We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled under evening skies
A garden which we all must see—
The garden of Gethsemane.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

With joyous steps we go our ways,
Love lends a halo to our days ;
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
We laugh, and say how strong we are.
We hurry on ; and hurrying, go
Close to the borderland of woe,
That waits for you, and waits for me—
Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams ;
Behind the misty caps of years,
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate ;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
"Not mine but thine," who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The *purpose* in Gethsemane.

POEMS OF LIFE

Momus, God of Laughter

THOUGH with the gods the world is cumbered,
Gods unnamed, and gods unnumbered,
Never god ~~was~~ known to be
Who had not his devotee.
So I dedicate to mine,
Here in verse, my temple-shrine.

'Tis not Ares—mighty Mars,
Who can give success in wars ;
'Tis not Morpheus, who doth keep
Guard above us while we sleep ;
'Tis not Venus, she whose duty
'Tis to give us love and beauty.
Hail to these, and others, after
Momus, gleesome god of laughter.

Quirinus would guard my health,
Plutus would insure me wealth ;
Mercury looks after trade,
Hera smiles on youth and maid.
All are kind, I own their worth,
After Momus, god of mirth.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Though Apollo, out of spite,
Hides away his face of light,
Though Minerva looks askance,
Deigning me no smiling glance,
Kings and queens may envy me
While I claim the god of glee.

Wisdom wearies, Love has wings—
Wealth makes burdens, Pleasure stings,
Glory proves a thorny crown—
So all gifts the gods throw down
Bring their pains and troubles after ;
All save Momus, god of laughter.
He alone gives constant joy,
Hail to Momus, happy boy !

The Two Glasses

THERE sat two glasses filled to the brim,
On a rich man's table, rim to rim.
One was ruddy and red as blood,
And one was clear as the crystal flood.

Said the glass of wine to his paler brother :
" Let us tell tales of the past to each other ;

POEMS OF LIFE

I can tell of banquet, and revel, and mirth,
Where I was king, for I ruled in might ;
For the proudest and grandest souls on earth
Fell under my touch, as though struck with
 blight.

From the heads of kings I have torn the
 crown ;

From the heights of fame I have hurled men
 down.

I have blasted many an honoured name ;
I have taken virtue and given shame ;
I have tempted the youth with a sip, a
 taste,

That has made his future a barren waste.

Far greater than any king am I,

Or than any army beneath the sky.

I have made the arm of the driver fail,

And sent the train from the iron rail.

I have made good ships go down at sea,

And the shrieks of the lost were sweet to me.

Fame, strength, wealth, genius before me
 fall,

And my might and power are over all !

Ho, ho ! pale brother," said the wine,

"Can you boast of deeds as great as mine ?"

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Said the water-glass : "I cannot boast
Of a king dethroned, or a murdered host,
But I can tell of hearts that were sad
By my crystal drops made bright and glad ;
Of thirsts I have quenched, and brows I have
laved ;

Of hands I have cooled, and souls I have
saved.

I have leaped through the valley, dashed down
the mountain,

Slept in the sunshine, and dripped from the
fountain.

I have burst my cloud-fetters and dropped
from the sky,

And everywhere gladdened the prospect and
eye ;

I have eased the hot forehead of fever and
pain ;

I have made the parched meadows grow fer-
tile with grain.

I can tell of the powerful wheel of the mill,
That ground out the flour and turned at my
will.

I can tell of manhood debased by you,
That I have uplifted and crowned anew ;

POEMS OF LIFE

I cheer, I help, I strengthen and aid ;
I gladden the heart of man and maid ;
I set the wine-chained captive free,
And all are better for knowing me."

These are the tales they told each other,
The glass of wine and its paler brother,
As they sat together, filled to the brim,
On a rich man's table, rim to rim.

What We Need

WHAT does our country need ? Not armies
standing

With sabres gleaming ready for the fight.
Not increased navies, skilful and commanding,
To bound the waters with an iron
might.

Not haughty men with gluttoned purses
trying

To purchase souls, and keep the power of
place.

Not jewelled dolls with one another vying
For palms of beauty, elegance, and grace.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

But we want women, strong of soul, yet
lowly,
With that rare meekness, born of gentle-
ness,
Women whose lives are pure and clean and
holy,
The women whom all little children
bless.
Brave, earnest women, helpful to each
other,
With finest scorn for all things low and
mean ;
Women who hold the names of wife and
mother
Far nobler than the title of a Queen.

Oh, these are they who mould the men of
story,
These mothers, oft-times shorn of grace
and youth,
Who, worn and weary, ask no greater
glory
Than making some young soul the home
of truth ;



POEMS OF LIFE

Who sow in hearts all fallow for the sowing
The seeds of virtue and of scorn for sin,
And, patient, watch the beauteous harvest
growing
And weed out tares which crafty hands
cast in.

Women who do not hold the gift of beauty
As some rare treasure to be bought and
sold,
But guard it as a precious aid to duty—
The outer framing of the inner gold ;
Women who, low above their cradles bending,
Let flattery's voice go by, and give no heed,
While their pure prayers like incense are
ascending ;
These are our country's pride, our country's
need.

Is it Done?

It is done ! in the fire's fitful flashes,
The last line has withered and curled.
In a tiny white heap of dead ashes
Lie buried the hopes of your world.

· POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

There were mad foolish vows in each letter,
It is well they have shrivelled and burned,
And the ring ! oh, the ring was a fetter
It was better removed and returned.

But, ah, is it done ? in the embers,
Where letters and tokens were cast,
Have you burned up the heart that remembers,
And treasures its beautiful past ?
Do you think in this swift reckless fashion
To ruthlessly burn and destroy
The months that were freighted with passion,
The dreams that were drunken with joy ?

Can you burn up the rapture of kisses
That flashed from the lips to the soul ?
Or the heart that grows sick for lost blisses
In spite of its strength of control ?
Have you burned up the touch of warm
fingers
That thrilled through each pulse and each
vein,
Or the sound of a voice that still lingers
And hurts with a haunting refrain ?

POEMS OF LIFE

Is it done ? is the life drama ended ?

You have put all the lights out, and yet,
Though the curtain, rung down, has descended,

Can the actors go home and forget ?
Ah, no !, they will turn in their sleeping
With a strange restless pain in their hearts,
And in darkness, and anguish and weeping,
Will dream they are playing their parts.

Burdened

DEAR God ! there is no sadder fate in life,
Than to be burdened so that you cannot
Sit down contented with the common lot
Of happy mother and devoted wife.
To feel your brain wild and your bosom
rife
With all the sea's commotion ; to be fraught
With fires and frenzies which you have not
sought,
And weighed down with the wide world's
weary strife.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

To feel a fever always in your breast,
To lean and hear half in affright, half shame,
A loud-voiced public boldly mouth your
name,
To reap your hard-sown harvest in unrest,
And know, however great your meed of
fame,
You are but a weak woman at the best.

In the Long Run

In the long run fame finds the deserving
man.

The lucky wight may prosper for a day,
But in good time true merit leads the van,
And vain pretence, unnoticed, goes its way.
There is no Chance, no Destiny, no Fate,
But Fortune smiles on those who work and
wait,

In the long run.

In the long run all goodly sorrows pay,
There is no better thing than righteous
pain !

POEMS OF LIFE

The sleepless nights, the awful thorn-crowned
days,

Bring sure reward to tortured soul and
brain.

Unmeaning joys enervate in the end,
But sorrow yields a glorious dividend—
In the long run.

In the long run all hidden things are known ;
The eye of truth will penetrate the night,
And good or ill, thy secret shall be known,
However well 'tis guarded from the light.
All the unspoken motives of the breast
Are fathomed by the years, and stand
confest—

In the long run.

In the long run all love is paid by love,
Though undervalued by the hosts of earth ;
The great eternal Government above
Keeps strict account and will redeem its
worth.

Give thy love freely ; do not count the cost ;
So beautiful a thing was never lost
In the long run.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

A Song

Is anyone sad in the world, I wonder ?

Does anyone weep on a day like this
With the sun above, and the green earth
under ?

Why, what is life but a dream of bliss ?

With the sun, and the skies, and the birds
above me,

Birds that sing as they wheel and fly—
With the winds to follow and say they love
me—

Who could be lonely ? O no, not I !

Somebody said, in the street this morning,
As I opened my window to let in the
light,

That the darkest day of the world was dawn-
ing ;

But I looked, and the East was a gorgeous
sight.

POEMS OF LIFE

One who claims that he knows about it
Tells me the Earth is a vale of sin ;
But I and the bees and the birds—we doubt
it,
And think it a world worth living in.
•

Someone says that hearts are fickle,
That love is sorrow, that life is care,
And the reaper Death, with his shining
sickle,
Gathers whatever is bright and fair.

I told the thrush, and we laughed together,
Laughed till the woods were all a-ring ;
And he said to me, as he plumed each
feather,
“ Well, people must croak, if they cannot
sing.”

Up he flew, but his song, remaining,
Rang like a bell in my heart all day,
And silenced the voices of weak complaining,
That pipe like insects along the way.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

O world of light, and O world of beauty !
Where are there pleasures so sweet as
thine ?
Yes, life is love, and love is duty ;
And what heart sorrows ? O no, not
mine !

To Marry or Not to Marry? A Girl's Reverie

MOTHER says, " Be in no hurry,
Marriage oft means care and worry."

Auntie says, with manner grave,
" Wife is synonym for slave."

Father asks, in tones commanding,
" How does Bradstreet rate his standing ?"

Sister, crooning to her twins,
Sighs, " With marriage care begins."

Grandma, near life's closing days,
Murmurs, " Sweet are girlhood's ways."

POEMS OF LIFE

Maud, twice widowed ("sod and grass")
Looks at me and moans "Alas!"

They are six, and I am one,
Life for me has just begun.

They are older, calmer, wiser :
Age should aye be youth's adviser.

They must know—and yet, dear me,
When in Harry's eyes I see

All the world of love there burning—
On my six advisers turning,

I make answer, "Oh, but Harry,
Is not like most men who marry.

"Fate has offered me a prize,
Life with love means Paradise.

"Life without it is not worth
All the foolish joys of earth."

So, in spite of all they say,
I shall name the wedding day.

POEMS OF LOVE



"Sweet Danger"

**THE danger of war, with its havoc of life,
The danger of ocean, when storms are rife,
The danger of jungles, where wild beasts
hide,**

**The danger that lies in the mountain slide—
Why, what are they but all mere child's play,
Or the idle sport of a summer day,
Beside those battles that stir and vex
The world forever, of sex with sex ?**

**The warrior returns from the captured fort,
The mariner sails to a peaceful port ;
The wild beast quails 'neath the strong man's
eye,**

**The avalanche passes the traveller by—
But who can rescue from passion's pyre
The hearts that were offered to feed its fire ?
Ah ! he who emerges from that fierce flame
Is scarred with sorrow or blackened with
shame.**

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Battle and bellow, and beast of prey,
They only threaten the mortal clay ;
The soul unfettered can take to wing,
But the danger of love is another thing.
Once under the tyrant Passion's control,
He crushes body, and heart, and soul.
An hour of rapture, an age of despair,
Ah ! these are the trophies of love's warfare.

And yet forever, since time began,
Has man dared woman and woman lured
man

To that sweet danger that lurks and lies
In the bloodless battle of eyes with eyes ;
That reckless danger, as vast as sweet,
Whose bitter ending is joy's defeat.
Ah ! thus forever, while time shall last,
On passion's altar must hearts be cast !

A Maiden's Secret

I HAVE written this day down in my heart
As the sweetest day in the season ;
From all of the others I've set it apart—
But I will not tell you the reason.

POEMS OF LOVE

That is my secret—I must not tell ;
But the skies are soft and tender,
And never before, I know full well,
Was the earth so full of splendour.

I sing at my labour the whole day long,
And my heart is as light as a feather ;
And there is a reason for my glad song
Besides the beautiful weather.
But I will not tell it to you ; and though
That thrush in the maple heard it,
And would shout it aloud if he could, I
know
He hasn't the power to word it.

Up, where I was sewing, this morn came
one
Who told me the sweetest stories ;
He said I had stolen my hair from the sun,
And my eyes from the morning glories.
Grandmother says that I must not believe
A word men say, for they flatter ;
But I'm sure *he* would never try to deceive
For he told me—but there—no matter !

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Last night I was sad, and the world to me
Seemed a lonely and dreary dwelling,
But some one then 'had not asked' me to
be—

There now ! I am almost telling.
Not another word shall my two lips say,
I will shut them fast together,
And never a mortal shall know to-day
Why my heart is as light as a feather.

A Baby in the House

I KNEW that a baby was hid in that house
Though I saw no cradle and heard no
cry ;
But the husband was tip-toeing 'round like a
mouse,
And the good wife was humming a soft
lullaby ;
And there was a look on the face of the
mother,
That I knew could mean only one thing, and
no other.

POEMS OF LOVE

The mother, I said to myself, for I knew
That the woman before me was certainly
that ;
And there lay in the corner a tiny cloth
shoe,
And I saw on a stand such a wee little
hat ;
And the beard of the husband said, plain as
could be,
"Two fat chubby hands have been tugging
at me."

And he took from his pocket a gay picture-
book,
And a dog that would bark if you pulled
on a string ;
And the wife laid them up, with such a
pleased look ;
And I said to myself, "There is no other
thing
But a babe that could bring about all this,
and so
That one is in hiding here somewhere, I
know."

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I stayed but a moment, and saw nothing
more,
And heard not a sound, yet I know I was
right;
What else could the shoe mean that lay on
the floor,
The book and the toy, and the faces so
bright;
And what made the husband as still as a
mouse?
I am sure, very sure, there's a babe in that
house.

I Told You

I TOLD you the winter would go, love,
I told you the winter would go.
That he'd flee in shame when the south wind
came,
And you smiled when I told you so.
You said the blustering fellow
Would never yield to a breeze,
That his cold, icy breath had frozen to death
The flowers, and birds, and trees.

POEMS OF LOVE

And I told 'you the snow would melt,
love,

In the passionate glance o' the sun ;
And the leaves o' the trees, and the flowers
and bees,

Would come back again, one by one.
That the great, grey clouds would vanish,
And the sky turn tender and blue ;
And the sweet birds would sing, and talk of
the spring,
And, love, it has all come true.

I told you that sorrow would fade, love,
And you would forget half your pain ;
That the sweet bird of song would waken
ere long,
And sing in your bosom again ;
That hope would creep out of the shadows,
And back to its nest in your heart,
And gladness would come, and find its old
home,
And that sorrow at length would depart.

I told you that grief seldom killed, love,
Though the heart may *seem* dead for awhile,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

But the world is so bright, and so full of
wahn light

That 'twould waken at length, in its
smile.

Ah, love ! was I not a true prophet ?

There's a sweet happy smile on your
face ;

Your sadness has flown—the snow-drift is
gone,

And the buttercups bloom in its place.

A Waif

My soul is like a poor caged bird to-night,

Beating its wings against the prison bars,

Longing to reach the outer world of light,

And, all untrammelled, soar among the
stars.

Wild, mighty thoughts struggle within my
soul

For utterance. Great waves of passion roll

Through all my being. As the lightnings
play

POEMS OF LOVE

Through thunder clouds, so beams of blinding
light
Flash for a moment on my darkened brain—
Quick, sudden, glaring beams, that fade
away
And leave me in a darker, deeper night.

Oh, poet souls ! that struggle all in vain
To live in peace and harmony with
earth,
It cannot be ! They must endure the pain
Of conscience and of unacknowledged
worth,
Moving and dwelling with the common
herd,
Whose highest thought has never strayed
as far,
Or never strayed beyond the horizon's
bar ;
Whose narrow hearts and souls are never
stirred
With keenest pleasures, or with sharpest
pain ;
Who rise and eat and sleep, and rise
again,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Nor question why or wherefore: Men whose
minds
Are never shaken by wild passion winds ;
Women whose broadest, deepest realm of
thought
The bridal veil will cover.

Who see not
God's mighty work lying undone to-day—
Work that a woman's hands can do as well,
Oh, soul of mine ; better to live alway
In this tumultuous inward pain and strife,
Doing the work that in thy reach doth fall,
Weeping because thou canst not do it all ;
Oh, better, my soul, in this unrest to dwell,
Than grovel as *they* grovel on through life.

One Woman's Plea

Now God be with the men who stand
In legislative halls, to-day.
Those chosen princes of our land—
May God be with them all, I say,
And may His wisdom guide and shield them,
For mighty is the trust we yield them.

POEMS OF LOVE

Oh, men ! who hold a people's fate,
There in the hollow of your hand.
Each word you utter, soon or late,
Shall leave its impress on our land—
Forth from the halls of legislation,
Shall speed its way through all our nation.

Then, may the Source of Truth and Light,
Be ever o'er them, ever near,
And may He guide each word aright ;
May no false precept greet the ear,
No selfish love, for purse, or faction,
Stay Justice's hand, or guide one action.

And may no one among these men
Lift to his lips the damning glass,
Let no man say, with truth, again,
What has been said, in truth, alas !
" Men drink, in halls of legislation—
Why shouldn't we, of lower station ? "

And may God's lasting curses fall
On those who hint, or boldly say,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

That men have need of alcohol,
Or that wine helps them, anyway.
These imps of hell—for all who aid them
May God's eternal curse upbraid them.

Oh, men ! you see, you hear this Beast,
This fiend that pillages the earth,
Whose work is death—whose hourly feast,
Is noble souls, and minds of worth—
You see—and if you will not chain him,
Nor reach one hand forth, to detain him,

For God's sake, do not give him aid,
Nor urge him onward. Oh, to me
It seems so strange that laws are made
To crush all other crimes, while he
Who bears down through Hell's gaping portals
The countless souls of rum-wrecked mortals

Is left to wander, to and fro,
In perfect freedom through the land,
And those who ought to see, and know,
Will lift no warning voice or hand.
Oh, men in halls of legislation,
Rise to the combat, save the nation !

POEMS OF LOVE

If,

If I were sent to represent
A portion of a nation
I would not chat, on this and that,
In the halls of legislation.
To show my power, I'd waste no hour
In aimless talk and bother,
Nor fritter away a precious day
On this and that and the other.

Whether the food a dog consumes
Wouldn't make a porker fatter,
And about a thousand useless things,
Of no import or matter—
Whether each day a man should pray
For our welfare, or shouldn't.
Now I do not say men do this way ;
I merely say I wouldn't !

No ! were I sent to represent
A state, or town, or county,
I'd do some good, and all I could,
To earn the people's bounty.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Instead of a dog, or a fattening hog,
I'd talk about men's drinking !
And, with words of fire, I would inspire
The stolid and unthinking.

And the time that I might idly waste,
(I don't say men do waste it),
I'd spend in pleading for my cause,
And, with tongue and pen, I'd haste it
Through all the land, till a mighty band,
With laws and legislation,
Should cleanse the stain and cut the chain
That binds our helpless nation.

And little need would there be then,
When that bright sun had risen,
Of asylum wings or building sites—
Of county or State prison.
The need is made by the liquor trade !
Oh, ye wise, sage law-makers,
'Tis the friend you smile upon that makes
Our madmen and law-breakers.

POEMS OF LOVE

Limitless

THERE is nothing, I hold, in the way of
work

That a human being may not achieve
If he does not falter, or shrink or shirk,
And more than all, if he will *believe*.

Believe in himself and the power behind,
That stands like an aid on a dual ground,
With hope for the spirit and oil for the
wound,
Ready to strengthen the arm or mind.

When the motive is right and the will is
strong
There are no limits to human power ;
For that great force back of us moves along
And takes us with it, in trial's hour.

And whatever the height you yearn to climb,
Tho' it never was trod by the foot of man,
And no matter how steep—I say you *can*,
If you will be patient—and use your time.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

A Fatal Impress

A LITTLE leaf just in the forest's edge,
All summer long had listened to the wooing
Of amorous birds that flew across the hedge,
Singing their blithe sweet songs for her un-
doing.

So many were the flattering things they told
her,
The parent tree seemed quite too small to
hold her.

At last one lonesome day she saw them fly
Across the fields behind the coquette
summer,
They passed her with a laughing light good-
bye,
When from the north there strode a strange
new comer ;
Bold was his mien, as he gazed on her,
crying,
" How comes it, then, that thou art left here
sighing !

POEMS OF LOVE

"Now by my faith thou art a lovely leaf—
May I not kiss that cheek so fair and
tender?"

Her slighted heart welled full of bitter grief,
The rudeness of his words did not offend her,
She felt so sad, so desolate, so deserted,
Oh, if her lonely fate might be averted.

"One little kiss," he sighed, "I ask no
more—"

His face was cold, his lips too pale for passion.
She smiled assent; and then bold Frost leaned
lower,
And clasped her close, and kissed in lover's
fashion.

Her smooth cheek flushed to sudden guilty
splendour,
Another kiss, and then complete surrender.

Just for a day she was a beautiful sight,
The world looked on to pity and admire
This modest little leaf, that in a night
Had seemed to set the forest all on fire.
And then—this victim of a broken trust,
A withered thing, was trodden in the dust

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Love

THE day is drawing near, my dear,
When you and I must sever ;
Yet whether near or far we are,
Our hearts will love forever,
Our hearts will love forever.

O sweet, I will be true, and you
Must never fail or falter ;
I hold a love like mine divine,
And yours—it must not alter,
O, swear it will not alter.

The Farewell

'Tis not the untried soldier new to danger
Who fears to enter into active strife.
Amidst the roll of drums, the cannon's
rattle,
He craves adventure, and thinks not of
life.

POEMS OF LOVE

But the scarred veteran knows the price of
glory,

He does not court the conflict or the fray.
He has no longing to rehearse that gory
And most dramatic act, of war's dark play.

He who to love has always been a stranger,
All unafraid may linger in your spell.
My heart has known the warfare, and its
danger.

It craves no repetition—so farewell.

The Kingdom of Love

IN the dawn of the day, when the sea and
the earth

Reflected the sunrise above,
I set forth, with a heart full of courage and
mirth,

To seek for the Kingdom of Love.
I asked of a Poet I met on the way,
Which cross-road would lead me aright,
And he said : "Follow me, and ere long you
will see

Its glistening turrets of Light."

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

And soon in the distance a city shone fair ;
 "Look yonder," he said, "there it
 gleams !"
But alas ! for the hopes that were 'doomed
 to despair,
 It was only the Kingdom of Dreams.
Then the next man I asked was 'a gay
 cavalier,
 And he said : "Follow me, follow me,"
And with laughter and song we went speed-
 ing along
 By the shores of life's beautiful sea.

Till we came to a valley more 'tropical far
 Than the wonderful Vale of Cashmere.
And I saw from a bower a face like a
 flower
 Smile out on the gay cavalier,
And he said : "We have come to humanity's
 goal—
 Here love and delight are intense."
But alas ! and alas ! for the hope of my
 soul—
 It was only the Kingdom of Sense.

POEMS OF LOVE

As I journeyed more slowly, I met on the
road
A coach with retainers behind,
And they said : "Follow us, for our lady's
abode
Belongs in the realm you would find."
'Twas a grand dame of fashion, a newly-wed
bride ;
I followed, encouraged and bold.
But my hope died away, like the last gleams
of day,
For we came to the Kingdom of Gold.

At the door of a cottage I asked a fair maid.
"I have heard of that Realm," she replied,
"But my feet never roam from the Kingdom
of Home,
So I know not the way," and she sighed.
I looked on the cottage, how restful it
seemed !
And the maid was as fair as a dove.
Great light glorified my soul as I cried,
"Why, *home* is the Kingdom of Love !"

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Love will Wane

WHEN your love begins to wane,
Spare me from the cruel pain
Of all speech that tells me so—
Spare me words, for I shall know,

By the half-averted eyes,
By the breast that no more sighs,
By the rapture I shall miss
From your strangely-altered kiss ;

By the arms that still enfold
But have lost their clinging hold,
And, too willing, let me go
I shall know, love, I shall know.

Bitter will the knowledge be,
Bitterer than death to me.
Yet, 'twill come to me some day,
For it is the sad world's way.

Make no vows—vows cannot bind
Changing hearts or wayward mind.
Men grow weary of a bliss
Passionate and fond as this.

POEMS OF LOVE

Love will wane. But I shall know,
If you do not tell me so.
Know it, tho' you smile and say,
That you love me more each day.

Know it by the inner sight
That forever sees aright.
Words could but increase my woe,
And without them, I shall know.

Three-fold

SOMEWHERE I've read a thoughtful mind's
reflection :

“All perfect things are threecfold” ; and I
know

Our love has this rare symbol of perfection ;
The brain's response, the warm blood's
rapturous glow,
The soul's sweet language, silent and un-
spoken.

All these unite us with a deathless tie.
For when our frail, clay tenement is broken,
Our spirits will be lovers still, on high.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

My dearest wish, you speak before I word
it.

You understand¹ the workings of my
heart.

My soul's thought, breathed where only 'God
has heard it,

You fathom with your strange divining
art.

And like a fire, that cheers, and lights, and
blesses,

And floods a mansion full of happy heat,
So does the subtle warmth of your caresses,
Pervade me with rapture, keen as sweet.

And so sometimes, as you and I together
Exult in all dear love's threefold delights,
I cannot help but vaguely wonder whether,
When our freed souls attain their spirit
heights,

E'en if we reach that upper realm where
God is,

And find the tales of heavenly glory true,
I wonder if we shall not miss our bodies,
And long, at times, for hours on earth we
knew.

POEMS OF LOVE

As now, we sometimes pray to leave our
prison

And soar beyond all physical demands,
So may we not sigh, when we have arisen,
• For just one old-time touch of lips and
• hands?

I know, dear heart, a thought like this seems
daring

Concerning God's vast Government above,
Yet, even *There*, I shrink from wholly
sparing

One element, from this, our Three-fold
Love.

Art and Love

FOR many long uninterrupted years
She was the friend and confidant of Art ;
They walked together, heart communed with
heart

In that sweet comradeship that so endears.
Her fondest hopes, her sorrows and her fears
She told her mate ; who would in turn impart
Important truths and secrets. But a dart,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Shot by that unskilled, mischievous boy, who
peers
From ambush on us, struck one day her
breast,
And Love sprang forth to kiss away her
tears.
She thought his brow shone with a wondrous
grace ;
But, when she turned to introduce her guest
To Art, behold, she found an empty place,
The goddess fled, with sad, averted face.

River and Sea .

UNDER the light of the silver moon
We two sat, when our hearts were
young ;
The night was warm with the breath of
• June,
And loud from the meadow the cricket
sung,
And darker and deeper, oh love, than the
sea,
Were your dear eyes, as they beamed on me.

POEMS OF LOVE

The moon hung clear, and the night was
still ;

The waters reflected the glittering skies ;
The nightingale sang on the distant hill ;
• But sweeter than all was the light in your
• eyes—

Your dear, dark eyes, your eyes like the sea—
And up from the depths shone love for me.

•
My heart, like a river, was mad and wild—
And a river is not deep, like the sea ;
But I said your love was the love of a child,
Compared with the love that was felt
by me ;

A river leaps noisily, kissing the land,
But the sea is fathomless, deep and grand.

I vowed to love you, for ever and ever ;
I called you cold, on that night in June,
But my fierce love, like a reckless river,
Dashed on, and away, and was spent too
soon ;
While yours—ah, yours was deep like the
sea ;
I cheated you, love, but you died for me !

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

In the Garden

ONE moment alone in the garden,
Under the August skies ;
The moon had gone but the stars shone on,—
Shone like your beautiful eyes.
Away from the glitter and gaslight,
Alone in the garden there,
While the mirth of the throng, in laugh and
song,
Floated out on the air.

You looked down through the starlight,
And I looked up at you ;
And a feeling came that I could not name,—
Something strange and new.
Friends of a few weeks only,—
Why should it give me pain
To know you would go on the morrow,
And would not come again ?

Formal friends of a season,
What matter that we must part ?
But under the skies, with a swift surprise,
Each read the other's heart.

POEMS OF LOVE

We did not speak, but your breath on my
cheek

Was like a breeze of the south;
And your dark hair brushed my forehead
And your kiss fell on my mouth.

•

Some one was searching for me,—
Some one to say good-night;
And we went in from the garden,
Out of the sweet starlight,
Back to the glitter and music,
And we said "Good-bye" in the hall,
When a dozen heard and echoed the word,
And then—well, that was all.

•

The river that rolls between us
Can never be crossed, I know,
For the waters are deep and the shores are
steep,
And a maelstrom whirls below;
But I think we shall always remember,
Though we both may strive to forget,
How you looked in my eyes, 'neath the
August skies,
After the moon had set;—

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

How you kissed my lips in the garden,
And we stood in a trance of bliss,
And our hearts seemed speaking together
In that one thrilling kiss.

When You Go Away

WHEN you go away, my friend,
When you say your last good-bye,
Then the summer time will end,
And the winter will be nigh.

Though the green grass decks the heather,
And the birds sing all the day,
There will be no summer weather
After you have gone away.

When I look into your eyes,
I shall thrill with deepest pain,
Thinking that beneath the skies
I may never look again.

POEMS OF LOVE

You will feel a moment's sorrow,
I shall feel a lasting grief;
You forgetting on the morrow,
I to mourn with no relief.

When we say the last sad word,
And you are no longer near,
And the winds and all the birds
Cannot keep the summer here,

Life will lose its full completeness—
Lose it not for you, but me;
All the beauty and the sweetness
Each can hold, I shall not see.

In Faith

WHEN the soft sweet wind o' the south went
by,
I dwelt in the light of a dark brown eye;
And out where the robin sang his song,
We lived and loved, while the days were
long.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

In the sweet, sweet eves, when the moon
 swung high,
We wandered under the starry sky ;
Or sat in the porch, and the moon¹ looked
 through
The latticed wall, where the roses grew.

My lips that had known no lover's kiss,
You taught the art, till they thrilled in bliss ;
And the moon, and the stars, and the roses
 knew
That the heart you won was pure and true.

But true hearts weary men, maybe,
For you grew weary of love, and me.
Over the porch the dead vines hang,
And a mourning dove sobs where the robin
 sang.

In a warmer clime does another sigh
Under the light of your dark brown eye ?
Did you follow the soft sweet wind o' the
 south,
And are you kissing a redder mouth ?

POEMS OF LOVE

Lips may be redder, and eyes more bright ;
The face may be fairer you see to-night ;
But never, love, while the stars shall shine,
Will you find a heart that is truer than
mine.

Sometime, perhaps, when south winds blow,
You will think of a love you used to know ;
Sometime, perhaps, when a robin sings,
Your heart will go back to olden things.

Sometime you will weary of this world's
arts,
Of deceit and change and hollow hearts,
And, wearying, sigh for the "used to be,"
And your feet will turn to the porch, and me.

I shall watch for you here when days grow
long ;
I shall list for your step through the robin's
song ;
I shall sit in the porch where the moon looks
through,
And a vacant chair will wait—for you.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

You may stray, and forget, and rove afar,
But my changeless love, like the polar star,
Will draw you at length o'er land and
sea —

And I know you will yet come back to me.

The years may come, and the years may go,
But sometime again, when south winds
blow,
When roses bloom, and the moon swings
high,
I shall live in the light of your dark brown
eye.

"The Old Moon in the New Moon's Arms"

THE beautiful and slender young New
Moon,

In trailing robes of pink and palest blue,
Swept close to Venus, and breathed low :

"A boon,

A precious boon, I ask, dear friend, of
you.

POEMS OF LOVE

“O queen of light and beauty, you have
known

The pangs of love—its passions and alarms ;
Then grant me this one favour, let my own---
My lost Old Moon be once more in my
arms.”

Swift thro' the vapours and the golden mist—
The Full Moon's shadowy shape shone on
the night,
The New Moon reached out clasping arms
and kissed
Her phantom lover in the whole world's
sight.

Searching

THESE quiet Autumn days,
My soul, like Noah's dove, on airy wings
Goes out and searches for the hidden things
Beyond the hills of haze.

With mournful, pleading cries,
Above the waters of the voiceless sea
That laps the shore of broad Eternity,
Day after day, it flies,

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Searching, but all in vain,
For some "stray leaf" that it may light
upon,
And read the future, as the days ago—
Its pleasure, and its pain.

Listening patiently
For some voice speaking from the mighty
deep,
Revealing all the things that it doth keep
In secret there for me.

Come back and wait, my soul !
Day after day thy search has been in
vain.
Voiceless and silent o'er the future's plain
Its mystic waters roll.

God, seeing, knoweth best,
And in His time the waters shall subside,
And thou shalt know what lies beneath
the tide,
Then wait, my soul, and rest.

POEMS OF LOVE

Our Blessings

SITTING to-day in the sunshine,
• That touched me with fingers of love,
I thought of the manifold blessings
God scatters on earth, from above ;
And they seemed, as I numbered them over,
Far more than we merit, or need,
And all that we lack is the angels
To make earth a heaven indeed.

The winter brings long, pleasant evenings,
The spring brings a promise of flowers
• That summer breathes into fruition,
And autumn brings glad, golden hours.
The woodlands re-echo with music,
The moonbeams ensilver the sea ;
There is sunlight and beauty about us,
And the world is as fair as can be.

But mortals are always complaining,
Each one thinks his own a sad lot ;
And forgetting the good things about him,
Goes mourning for those he has not.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Instead of the star-spangled heavens,
We look on the dust at our feet ;
We drain out the cup that is bitter,
Forgetting the one that is sweet. ‘

We mourn o’er the thorn in the flower,
Forgetting its odour and bloom ;
We pass by a garden of blossoms,
To weep o’er the dust of the tomb.
There are blessings unnumbered about us,—
Like the leaves of the forest they grow ;
And the fault is our own—not the Giver’s—
That we have not an Eden below.

Going Away

WALKING to-day on the Common,
I heard a stranger say
To a friend who was standing near him,
“Do you know I am going away ?”
I had never seen their faces,
May never see them again ;
Yet the words the stranger uttered,
Stirred me with nameless pain.

POEMS OF LOVE

For I knew some heart would miss him,
Would ache at his "going away !"
And the earth would seem all cheerless
For many and many a day.
No matter how light my spirits,
No matter how glad my heart,
If I hear those two words spoken,
The teardrops always start.

They are so sad and solemn,
So full of a lonely sound ;
Like dead leaves rustling downward,
And dropping upon the ground,
Oh, I pity the naked branches,
When the skies are dull and grey,
And the last leaf whispers softly,
"Good-bye, I am going away."

In the dreary, dripping autumn,
The wings of the flying birds,
As they soar away to the south land,
Seem always to say those words.
Wherever they may be spoken,
They fall with a sob and sigh ;
And heartaches follow the sentence,
"I am going away, Good-bye."

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Oh God, in Thy blessed kingdom,
No lips shall ever say,
No ears shall ever harken
To the words "I am going away."
For no soul ever wearies
Of the dear, bright angel land,
And no saint ever wanders
From the sunny golden land.

Be not Weary

SOMETIMES, when I am toil-worn and a-
weary,
All tired out with working long and
well,
And earth is dark, and skies above are
dreary,
And heart and soul are all too sick to tell,
These words have come to me like angel
fingers
Pressing the spirit's eyelids down in sleep,
"Oh let us not be weary in well doing,
For in due season we shall surely reap."

POEMS OF LOVE

Oh blessed promise ! When I seem to
hear it,

Whispered by angel voices on the air,
It breathes new life and courage to my spirit,
• And gives me strength to suffer and for-
bear.

And I can wait most patiently for harvest,
And cast my seeds, nor ever faint, nor
weep,

If I know surely that my work availeth,
And in God's season, I at last shall reap.

When mind and body were borne down
completely,

And I have thought my efforts were all
in vain,
These words have come to me so softly,
sweetly,

And whispered hope, and urged me on
again.

And though my labour seems all unavailing,
And all my striving fruitless, yet the Lord
Doth treasure up each little seed I scatter,
And sometime, *sometime*, I shall reap
reward.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

The Summons

SOME day, when the golden glory
Of June is over the earth,
And the birds are singing together
In a wild, mad strain of mirth ;
When the skies are as clear and cloudless
As the skies of June can be,
I would like to have the summons
Sent down from God to me.

Some glowing, golden morning
In the heart of the summer time,
As I stand in the perfect vigour
And strength of my youth's glād prime ;
When my heart is light and happy,
And the world seems bright to me,
I would like to drop from this earth life,
As a green leaf drops from the tree.

I would not wait for the furrows—
For the faded eyes and hair ;
But pass out swift and sudden,
Ere I grow heart-sick with care ;

POEMS OF LOVE

I would break some morn in my singing-
Or fall in my springing walk
As a full-blown flower will sometimes
Drop, all a-bloom, from the stalk.

I think the leaf would sooner
Be the first to break away,
Than to hang alone in the orchard
In the bleak November day.
And I think the fate of the flower
That falls in the midst of bloom
Is sweeter than if it lingered
To die in the autumn's gloom.

And so, in my youth's glad morning,
While the summer walks abroad,
I would like to hear the summons,
That must come, sometime, from God.
I would pass from the earth's perfection
To the endless June above ;
From the fullness of living and loving,
To the noon of Immortal Love.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Conversion

WHEN this world's pleasures for my soul
sufficed,
Ere my heart's plummet sounded depths of
pain,
I called on Reason to control my brain,
And scoffed at that old story of the Christ.

But when o'er burning wastes my feet had
trod,
And all my life was desolate with loss,
With bleeding hands I clung about the
cross,
And cried aloud, "Man needs a suffering
God!"

Denied

THE winds came out of the west one day,
And hurried the clouds before them;
And drove the shadows and mists away,
And over the mountains bore them.

POEMS OF LOVE

And I wept, "Oh, wind, blow into my
mind,
Blow into my soul and heart,
And scatter the clouds that hang like shrouds,
And make the shadows depart."

•

The rain came out of the leaden skies
And beat on the earth's cold bosom.
It said to the sleeping grass, "Arise,"
And the young buds sprang in blossom.
And I wept in pain, "Oh, blessed rain,
Beat into my heart to-day ;
Thaw out the snows that are chilling it so,
Till it blossoms in hope, I pray."

•

The sunshine fell on the bare-armed trees,
In a wonderful sheen of glory ;
And the young leaves rustled and sang to the
breeze,
And whispered a love-fraught story.
And "Sun, oh shine on this heart of mine,
And woo it to life," I cried ;
But the wind, and sun, and rain, each one
The coveted boon denied.

POEMS OF REFLECTION



Bohemia

BOHEMIA, o'er thy unatlassed borders
How many cross, with half-reluctant feet,
And unformed fears of dangers and disorders,
To find delights, more wholesome and
more sweet
Than ever yet were known to the "*élite*."

Herein can dwell no pretence and no
seeming ;
No stilted pride thrives in this atmosphere,
Which stimulates a tendency to dreaming.
The shores of the ideal world, from
here,
Seem sometimes to be tangible and near.

We have no use for formal codes of fashion ;
No "Etiquette of Courts" we emulate ;
We know it needs sincerity and passion
To carry out the plans of God, or fate ;
We do not strive to seem inanimate.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

We call no time lost that we give to pleasure ;
Life's hurrying river speeds to Death's
great sea ;

We cast out no vain plummet-line to measure
Imagined depths of that unknown To Be,
But grasp the *Now*, and fill it full of glee.

All creeds have room here, and we all
together

Devoutly worship at Art's sacred shrine ;
But he who dwells once in thy golden
weather,

Bohemia—sweet, lovely land of mine—
Can find no joy outside thy border-line.

Lines from "Maurine"

I'd rather have my verses win
A place in common people's hearts,
Who, toiling through the strife and din
Of life's great thoroughfares, and marts,
May read some line my hand has penned ;
Some simple verse, not fine, or grand,
But what their hearts can understand
And hold me henceforth as a friend—

POEMS OF REFLECTION

I'd rather win *such* quiet fame
Than by some fine thought, polished so
But those of learned minds would know,
Just what the meaning of my song—
To have the critics sound my name
In high-flown praises, loud and long.

I sing not for the critic's ear,
But for the masses. If they hear,
Despite the turmoil, noise and strife,
Some least low note that gladdens life,
I shall be wholly satisfied,
Though critics to the end deride.

When

I DWELL in the western inland,
Afar from the sounding sea,
But I seem to hear it sobbing
And calling aloud to me,
And my heart cries out for the ocean
As a child for its mother's breast,
And I long to lie on its waters
And be lulled in its arms to rest.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I can close my eyes and fancy
That I hear its mighty roar,
And I see its blue waves splashing
And plunging against the shore ;
And the white foam caps the billow,
And the sea-gulls wheel and cry,
And the cool wild wind is blowing
And the ships go sailing by.

Oh, wonderful, mighty ocean !
When shall I ever stand,
Where my heart has gone already,
There on thy gleaming strand !
When shall I ever wander
Away from this inland west,
And stand by thy side, dear ocean,
And rock on thy heaving breast ?

Sunshine and Shadow

LIFE has its shadows, as well as its sun ;
Its lights and its shades, all twined together.
I tried to single them out, one by one,
Single and count them, determining whether

POEMS OF REFLECTION

There was less blue than there was grey,
And more of the deep night than of the day.
But dear me, dear me, my task's but begun.
And I am not half way into the sun.

•

For the longer I look on the bright side of
earth,

The more of the beautiful do I discover ;
And really, I never knew what life was worth
Till I searched the wide storehouse of
happiness over.

•

It is filled from the cellar well up to the skies,
With things meant to gladden the heart and
the eyes.

The doors are unlocked, you can enter each
room,
That lies like a beautiful garden in bloom.

Yet life has its shadow, as well as its sun ;
Earth has its storehouse of joy and of
sorrow.

But the first is so wide—and my task's but
begun—
That the last must be left for a far distant
morrow.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

I will count up the blessings God gave in a
row,
But dear me! when I get through them, I
know
I shall have little time left for the rest,
For life is a swift-flowing river at best.

The Belle's Soliloquy

HEIGH ho! well, the season's over!
Once again we've come to Lent!
Programme's changed from balls and parties—
Now we're ordered to repent.
Forty days of self-denial!
Tell you what I think it pays—
Know't'l freshen my complexion
Going slow for forty days.

No more savoury Frenchy suppers—
Such as Madame R- — can give.
Well, I need a little *thinning*—
Just a trifle—sure's you live!
Sometimes been afraid my plumpness
Might grow into downright fat.
Rector urges need of fasting—
Think there's lot of truth in that.

POEMS OF REFLECTION

We must meditate, he tells us,
On our several acts of sin.
And repent them. Let me see now—
Whereabouts shall I begin !
Flirting—yes, they say 'tis wicked ;
Well, I'm awful penitent.
(Wonder if my handsome major
Goes to early mass through Lent ?)

Love of dress ! I'm guilty there, too—
Guess it's my besetting sin.
Still I'm somewhat like the lilies,
For I neither toil nor spin.
Forty days I'll wear my plainest—
Could repentance be more true ?
What a saving on my dresses !
They'll make over just like new.

Pride, and worldliness and all that,
Rector bade us pray about
Every day through Lenten season,
And I mean to be devout !
Papa always talks retrenchment—
Lent is just the very thing.
Hope he'll get enough in pocket
So we'll move up town next spring.

POEMS OF ELLA W. WILCOX

Beyond

It seemeth such a little way to me
Across to that strange country—the Be-
yond ;
And yet, not strange, for it has grown to be
The home of those of whom I am so fond ;
They make it seem familiar and most dear,
As journeying friends bring distant regions
near.

So close it lies, that when my sight is clear
I think I almost see the gleaming strand.
I know I feel those who have gone from
here
Come near enough sometimes, to touch my
hand.
I often think, but for our veiled eyes,
We should find heaven right round about us
lies.

I cannot make it seem a day to dread,
When from this dear earth I shall journey
out

POEMS OF REFLECTION

To that still dearer country of the dead,
And join the lost ones, so long dreamed
about.

I love this world, yet shall I love to go
And meet the friends who wait for me, I
know.

I never stand above a bier and see
The seal of death set on some well-loved
face

But that I think, "One more to welcome me,
When I shall cross the intervening space
Between this land and that one 'over there';
One more to make the strange Beyond seem
fair."

And so for me there is no sting to death,
And so the grave has lost its victory.
It is but crossing—with a bated breath,
And white, set face—a little strip of sea,
To find the loved ones waiting on the shore,
More beautiful, more precious than before.



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